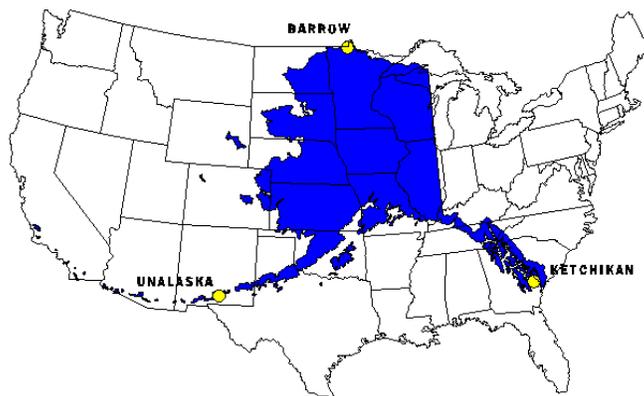


Transportation Planning Certification Review

FHWA Alaska
Division

FTA, Region 10



Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions (AMATS)

FFY 2010



Final Report

April 8, 2011



Transportation Planning Certification Review
Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions
(AMATS)

September 21-22, 2010

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Prepared by
Federal Highway Administration
Federal Transit Administration

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Executive Summary

The US Department of Transportation (USDOT) is required to review and evaluate the transportation planning processes of transportation management areas (TMAs) no less than once every four years. The review is conducted by a team of representatives from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA). It consists of an examination of the Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) documented practices, procedures, guidelines and activities followed by a field review that includes meetings with the MPO management and staff, a public input session, and a follow up assessment and report on the findings and recommendations of the Review Team. The review culminates in a joint statement of certification by the FHWA and the FTA.

In July 2010, the Review Team provided the Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions (AMATS) with a preliminary list of questions and documentation needs corresponding to the major topics of interest in the review. These questions and documentation requests, which reflect current regulatory requirements for metropolitan planning programs, were intended to assist both the Review Team and AMATS by framing the issues and subject areas to be covered in the review. In follow up, AMATS staff provided detailed written responses to the Review Team's questions as well as hard copies or internet links to the requested documents. On September 21-22, 2010, the Review Team conducted an on-site visit with MPO and State agency staff as well as the general public.

The body of this report is intended to document the findings, corrective actions, recommendations and comments as determined by the Review Team. **Findings** are a statement of the conditions found on a given subject area during the course of the review. **Corrective Actions** concern areas in which the MPO currently fails to satisfy the intent of the Federal requirements and which, if left unaddressed, could result in restrictions being imposed on the MPO's program. **Recommendations and Comments** highlight elements of the MPO's program that demonstrate well-thought-out practices and procedures, opportunities to enhance processes that already meet minimum Federal requirements, or other general observations and input judged appropriate to include with the report. A summary of the corrective actions, recommendations and comments for this review is provided in Table 1, below.

For the purpose of certification, the outcome of this review is as follows:

The Federal Transit Administration and the Federal Highway Administration jointly certify that the planning process conducted by the Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions meets the requirements of 23 CFR 450, Section 334(b)(i) subject to the corrective actions identified below.

Table 1

Summary of Corrective Actions, Recommendations and Comments

Topic	Corrective Actions	Commendations
Metropolitan Planning Area Boundaries	None	None
Study Area Organizational Structure	None	We commend AMATS for its on-going coordination and consultation with the tribal government of the Native Village of Eklutna.
Agreements and Contracts	None	AMATS has demonstrated established coordination and consultation with tribal governments.
Self-Certification	None	The members of the TAC who represent the MOA Transportation Department, the State DOT, the State Department of Environmental Conservation etc, are given extensive opportunity to comment and modify the self-certification statements before they are finalized.
Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)	None	None
Transportation Planning Process	None	AMATS utilizes an online interactive TIP map to allow agencies to track TIP projects.
Management and Operations	None	None
Metropolitan Transportation Plan	See Financial Planning Section	AMATS is commended for its updated plan addressing SAFETEA-LU compliance by more extensively addressing environmental mitigation, consultation, security, safety, freight mobility, and operations management.
Transportation Improvement Program	None	Community Councils are invited to participate in the ranking and scoring of projects in the development of the 2010-2013 TIP. The Community Councils are also invited to offer potential

		projects for inclusion into the TIP.
Integrating Freight in the Planning Process	None	The FAC is a fine example of a sub-committee which has been energized to provide substantive input to the Anchorage metropolitan planning process and the Policy Committee.
Congestion Management Process	Two areas that are not adequately addressed by the current Congestion Management Process (CMP) include: 1) Identification of an implementation schedule, implementation responsibilities, and possible funding sources for each selected strategy, and 2) Implementation of a process for periodic assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of implemented strategies (23 CFR 450.320(c)(5)(6)). These elements should be incorporated as part of the CMP during the update of the LRTP.	A Mobility Coordinator was hired by the Public Transportation Department to assist in the implementation of the Travel Options Program outlined in the 2005 LRTP.
Financial Planning and Fiscal Constraint	The LRTP must provide adequate documentation of methods and assumptions used to determine the full capital as well as maintenance and operational cost for all travel modes over the life of the LRTP. In addition, adequate documentation is needed of the methods used to determine projected revenue sources and identify strategies for ensuring availability of proposed new revenues (23 CFR 450.322(f)(10)(ii)). These enhancements to the financial plan element should be addressed as part of the upcoming LRTP update.	
Air Quality and Conformity	None	AMATS is commended for working well with ADEC and the other consultation agencies and appears to be using their Air Quality Advisory Committee in an effective manner.
Public Outreach	None	AMATS conducted an extensive public outreach program for the

		Highway to Highway corridor during the planning process for the 2025 LRTP. It received FHWA Context Sensitive Solution Best Practice recognition.
Title VI	AMATS shall develop assurances that the program will be conducted in compliance with all requirements imposed by Title VI and the related laws and regulations. (49 CFR 21.7(a)). These assurances, a Title VI implementation plan and complaint procedures, should be developed with guidance from the DOT&PF Civil Rights Office by 06/01/2012. It should include a LEP Needs Assessment to develop an AMATS LEP Policy.	None
Intelligent Transportation Systems	AMATS has not adopted a maintenance plan for the regional ITS architecture. 23CFR940.9 (f) requires a MPO to develop and implement procedures and responsibilities for maintaining regional architecture, as needs evolve within the region. The ITS subcommittee formation and the regional ITS architecture updates are opportunities to develop and implement a maintenance plan for the regional architecture. Procedures and responsibilities for maintaining the regional architecture needs be developed by 01/01/2013.	None

Introduction (23 CFR 450 Subpart C)

A Transportation Management Area (TMA) is a designation assigned by the Secretary of Transportation for metropolitan areas having an urbanized population of over 200,000 persons. In south central Alaska, the Anchorage Bowl and Chugiak/Eagle River portions of the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) constitute a TMA. The organization designated by the State's Governor to carry out the federally funded transportation planning activities for this TMA is the Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions (AMATS).

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) are required to jointly review and evaluate the transportation planning processes for each Transportation Management Area (TMA) no less than every four years to determine if those processes meet the requirements of *23 CFR Part 450, Subpart C - Metropolitan Transportation Planning and Programming*. In addition, for TMAs that are in non-attainment or maintenance areas for transportation related pollutants, the review must also evaluate the metropolitan planning organization's (MPO) processes to verify that they are adequate to ensure conformity of plans and programs in accordance with procedures contained in US Environmental Protection Agency Air Quality Regulations *40 CFR Part 51- Requirements for Preparation, Adoption, and Submittal of Implementation Plans*.

Upon completion of the review and evaluation, FHWA and FTA must take one of the following actions:

1. Jointly certify that the transportation planning process meets or substantially meets the requirements of *23 CFR 450 Subpart C*;
2. Jointly certify the transportation planning process subject to certain specified corrective actions being taken;
3. Jointly certify the transportation planning process as the basis for approval of only certain categories of programs and projects, or;
4. Withhold certification and the approval of certain apportionments and projects.

Metropolitan Planning Area Boundaries (23 CFR 450.312)

Regulatory Basis:

Federal legislation (*23 USC 134(c): 49 USC 5303(d)*) requires boundaries of a metropolitan planning area to be determined by agreement between the MPO and the Governor. Each metropolitan planning area shall encompass at least the existing Urbanized Area (UZA) and the contiguous area expected to become urbanized within a 20 year forecast period; and may encompass the entire metropolitan statistical area or consolidated metropolitan statistical area, as defined by the Bureau of the Census.

Findings:

- No corrective actions /recommendations provided in the last certification review.
- Transit service is provided by the Public Transportation Department within the Municipality of Anchorage (People Mover) and also to areas outside the UZA. The service is not considered to be rural and thus is not provided with Section 5311 funds.

- There is only one recognized tribal entity in Anchorage: Native Village of Eklutna. They are included in planning in the same way as all other groups and organizations.
- The primary federal land holdings within the AMATS planning area include the Elmendorf Air Force Base and Fort Richardson Army Base (recently combined into: Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson).

Corrective Actions:

- None

Recommendations and Comments:

- The upcoming 2010 census should prompt reevaluation of the planning boundaries. In particular, AMATS should work closely with urbanizing areas of Wasilla and Palmer in the Mat-Su Borough in determining appropriate long-term planning boundaries.

Study Area Organizational Structure (23 CFR 450.310)

Regulatory Basis:

Federal legislation (*23 USC 134(b); Section 49 USC 5303*) requires the designation of a MPO for each UZA with a population of more than 50,000 individuals. The policy board of the MPO that serves a TMA shall consist of (A) local elected officials, (B) officials of local agencies that administer or operate major modes of transportation within the area, and (C) appropriate State officials. This designation remains in effect until the MPO is re-designated. The addition of jurisdictional or political bodies into the MPO or members to the policy board generally does not constitute a re-designation of the MPO.

As a result of TEA-21, 23 USC 134(b)(2) was modified with respect to Transportation Management Areas. Upon designation of a MPO as a TMA (rather than only when the MPO itself is designated/re-designated), the policy board shall be structured to include (A) local elected officials, (B) officials of local agencies that administer or operate major modes of transportation within the area, and (C) appropriate State officials.

Findings:

- No corrective actions/recommendations provided in the last certification review.
- Anchorage is the only municipality in the MPO.
- The Policy Committee is comprised of five members: two Anchorage Assembly members selected by that body; the Mayor of Anchorage; the Governor’s designee for Air Quality (Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC), Air Quality Program Manager); and the Governor’s designee for Transportation (Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF) Central Region Director).
- The AMATS Technical Advisory Committee is used effectively by the policy committee and other constituents.
- AMATS has demonstrated established coordination and consultation with tribal governments. The Municipality of Anchorage has entered in to a consultation agreement

with the Native Village of Eklutna (NVE) that requires AMATS to coordinate with the village on transportation and air quality planning and programs.

- The Municipal Public Transportation Department operates the metropolitan transit system, which includes People Mover and Rideshare. AMATS therefore meets the federal requirement that the voting membership of an MPO policy body designated/re-designated subsequent to December 18, 1991, and serving a TMA, must include representation of officials of agencies that administer or operate transit.

A stated function of the Planning and Zoning Commission is that of a citizen's advisory committee. The Planning and Zoning Commission is appointed by the mayor, who is also the vice chair of the AMATS policy committee. The Planning and Zoning Commission have varies professional and community backgrounds that include transportation planning, logistics management, military, industrial trades and low income housing.

Corrective Actions:

- None

Recommendations and Comments:

- We commend AMATS for its on-going coordination and consultation with the tribal government of the Native Village of Eklutna.
- There is typically a distinction between the function and makeup of a planning and zoning committee and a citizen advisory committee. AMATS should evaluate the makeup of the planning and zoning commission to determine if it represents the diverse makeup of Anchorage citizens and transportation stakeholders. Ideally, the group would represent a sample of the public and transportation stakeholders in the AMATS planning area.

Agreements and Contracts (23 CFR 450.314)

Regulatory Basis:

Federal legislation (*23 USC 134*) requires the MPO to work in cooperation with the State and public transportation agencies in carrying out a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (*3C*) metropolitan planning process. These agencies determine their respective and mutual roles and responsibilities and procedures governing their cooperative efforts. Federal regulations require that these relationships be specified in agreements between the MPO and the State and between the MPO and the public transit operators. The regulations also require an agreement between the MPO and any other agency responsible for air quality planning under the Clean Air Act. A single agreement should be executed among the MPO, State, transit operators, and designated air quality regulations "to the extent possible." *23 CFR 450.314(a)*.

Findings:

- No corrective actions/ recommendations provided in last certification review.
- The transit operator is part of the MOA and is therefore represented on the MPO Technical Advisory Committee and is party to the Operating Agreement.

- Air quality planning is a joint work effort through AMATS between Municipal Health and Human Services, the ADEC and the DOT&PF. Both Municipal Health and Human Services and the ADEC as well as DOT&PF have representation on the AMATS Technical Advisory Committee and the ADEC and DOT&PF are represented on the Policy Committee (PC). Air quality planning is directed out of the Operating Agreement.
- There are no Native Tribes having a land base within the AMATS planning area. The only federally recognized tribe is the Native Village of Eklutna.
- The AMATS Operating Agreement was recently revised. It was signed October 16, 2002, and went into effect January 1, 2003. An agreement with the Native Village of Eklutna was signed on April 25, 2007. There is also a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between the ADEC and the MOA for Air Quality Control signed on July 30, 2010.
- While there is no set schedule for updating the AMATS operating agreement, it is checked from time to time to ensure it is up to date. A revision is currently in the works to reflect some changes arising from SAFETEA-LU along with changes in the MOA organization of departments.

There are no agreements between AMATS and adjacent jurisdictions (Matanuska-Susitna Borough, Wasilla, Palmer, Kenai Peninsula, etc) with respect to protocols, roles, responsibilities or cooperation for issues of shared concern or for projects that cross boundaries.

Corrective Actions:

- None

Recommendations and Comments:

- Because of the size and complexity of the proposed Knik Arm Crossing project, it is suggested that AMATS consider developing an agreement(s) with Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority (KABATA), Mat-Su Borough, the cities of Wasilla, Palmer, Houston and any other jurisdiction that will be directly impacted by the project. Agreement(s) with affected jurisdictions would establish communication protocols, roles and responsibilities of all parties to improve coordination and consultation.
- AMATS is encouraged to establish a policy for periodic review and update of contracts and agreements to ensure timely and accurate review and revisions if needed.

Self-Certifications (23 CFR 450.334)

Regulatory Basis:

Self-Certification of the metropolitan planning process is required under 23 CFR 450.334 at least once every four years. The State and the MPO shall certify to FHWA and FTA that the planning process is addressing the major issues facing the area and is conducted in accordance with all applicable requirements of 23 CFR 450.300 and:

- 23 U.S.C. 134 and 49 U.S.C. 5303 and Sections 174 and 176(c) and (d) of the Clean Air Act (if applicable)

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Title VI assurance executed by each State
- 49 U.S.C. 5332, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, sex, or age in employment or business opportunity
- Section 1101(b) of SAFETEA-LU and 49 CFR Part 26, regarding involvement of Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) in U.S. DOT-funded planning projects
- 23 CFR Part 230, regarding the implementation of an equal employment opportunity program on Federal and Federal-aid highway construction contracts
- ADA and U.S. DOT regulations governing transportation for people with disabilities [49 CFR Parts 27, 37, and 38]
- Older Americans Act as amended, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of age
- Section 324 of Title 23 U.S.C., regarding the prohibition of discrimination based on gender
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and 49 CFR Part 27, regarding discrimination against individuals with disabilities
- All other applicable provisions of Federal law (e.g., while no longer specifically noted in a self-certification, prohibition of use of Federal funds for “lobbying” still applies and should be covered in all grant agreement documents (see 23 CFR 630.112).

Findings:

- No corrective actions/recommendations provided in last certification review.
- AMATS self-certifies the planning process through an annual report presented to both the TAC and PC.
- The members of the TAC who represent the MOA Transportation Department, the State DOT, the State Department of Environmental Conservation etc, are given extensive opportunity to comment and modify the self-certification statements before they are finalized. In addition, many of the members are involved in the planning process itself such that their actions are being certified.
- A self-certification document is prepared and presented for review and approval to both the AMATS TAC and PC before it is presented to FHWA and FTA. The document includes all supporting documentation and information necessary for the Policy Committee to ensure the AMATS planning process meets all applicable requirements.
- The AMATS Operating Agreement includes a section related to DBE Program requirements, including subsections on compliance, US DOT policy, and DBE obligation, as well as a section on Title VI requirements and the MOA requirements for compliance. All federally funded projects must comply with these requirements along

with any other federal requirements including but not limited to ADA requirements. The MOA Purchasing Department enforces the Title VI and DBE requirements related to any consultant services.

Corrective Actions:

- None

Recommendations and Comments:

- None

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) (23 CFR 450.308)

Regulatory Basis:

23 CFR 450.308 identifies the requirements for unified planning work programs (UPWPs) to be prepared in Transportation Management Areas. 23 CFR 420.109 governs how FHWA planning funds are distributed to the MPOs. 49 USC 5303(h) allocates FTA assistance to MPOs. MPOs are required to develop the UPWPs in cooperation with the State and public transit agencies [450.308(c)].

Elements to be included in the UPWP are:

- Discussion of the planning priorities facing the metropolitan planning area
- Description of all metropolitan transportation planning and transportation-related air quality planning activities anticipated within the next 1 or 2 year period, regardless of funding source or agencies conducting activities, indicating:
 - *Who* will perform the work
 - *Schedule* for completion of the work, and
 - Intended *products*

Findings:

- No corrective actions/recommendations provided in last certification review.
- During the third quarter, a preliminary UPWP is drafted with generalized scope and resource demands identified. These tasks and staff allocations are refined to the point where staff is comfortable in requesting the Technical Advisory Committee to release the Draft Unified Planning Work Program for a 30-day public review and comment period.
- AMATS staff incorporates all transportation and/or air quality related planning activities into the Unified Planning Work Program, regardless of funding sources. This includes all plans identified in the AMATS Transportation Improvement Program, and in the MOA General Government Budget.
- The draft is posted electronically on the AMATS website, and paper copies are available at the public libraries, as well as public counters at City Hall, and the Municipal Planning & Development Center.

- Once comments and necessary inputs are received, they are incorporated into the final document, which is presented to the Technical Advisory Committee for recommendation, and finally to the Policy Committee for approval. Once the Policy Committee has adopted the UPWP, it is submitted to DOT&PF Central Region for transmittal to their headquarters, FHWA, and FTA.
- Staff revisits the significant transportation issues facing Anchorage, as recognized in the previous and/or current UPWP. The Anchorage Bowl 2025 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) approved December 2005, amended April 2007, provides additional direction to the prioritization of projects/tasks within the Unified Planning Work Program. Potential studies and projects address the major issues and/or recommendations of the LRTP, are identified and categorized, and appropriate resources are acknowledged. Note: The term “Metropolitan Transportation Plan” (23 CFR 450.304) is equivalent to a Long Range Transportation Plan in a MPO planning area. AMATS used the term LRTP in their 2025 plan; therefore, LRTP will be used in this document except when quoting regulations.
- The current UPWP document appears to be lacking a timeline to signify anticipated completion of interim products for the various work tasks.
- AMATS 2010-2011 UPWP was submitted to FHWA for review and approval on December 19, 2009. There had been some prior coordination of the document; however, FHWA did require clarification of a number of items including rectifying discrepancies between task descriptions and the budget spreadsheet. FHWA ultimately approved the UPWP on December 30, 2009 contingent on final editing. At that time, FHWA advised AMATS that tasks and schedules should be more informative where possible and to move toward more detailed work plans to ensure focus and so that progress will be determinable in all of the high priority initiatives.
- The request for authorization to proceed with the UPWP using federal funds was not received until on or about January 18, 2010 making all work between January 1 and January 18 potentially ineligible for federal participation. FHWA ultimately determined the costs eligible pursuant to 23 CFR 1.9(b).

Corrective Actions:

None

Recommendations and Comments:

- The 2011-2012 AMATS Unified Planning Work Program should be sufficiently detailed to assess progress on major work items and include a timeline to estimate the schedule for completing the work tasks outlined in the document. This timeline can correspond to quarters of the fiscal year. In this manner, the UPWP becomes more of a task management document (23 CFR 450.308 (c)).
- AMATS should coordinate the UPWP with FHWA and FTA well in advance of its effective date and secure authorization to proceed in advance of beginning work.

Transportation Planning Process (23 CFR 450.306, 316 & 318)

Regulatory Basis:

Federal regulations 23 CFR 450.306 and 450.318 define the scope of the metropolitan transportation planning process and the relationship of corridor and other subarea planning studies to the metropolitan planning process and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements. In addition, 23 CFR 345.316 (c)(d) and (e) address the need for participation by Federal lands management agencies and Tribal governments in the development of key products in the planning process.

Key provisions of 23 CFR 450.306 are related to required planning factors, coordination, and consistency with related planning processes, asset management, and possible differences in requirements for TMAs and non-TMAs.

Planning Factors:

- Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency
- Increase the safety of the transportation system
- Increase the security of the transportation system
- Increase the accessibility and mobility for people and freight
- Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns
- Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight
- Promote efficient system management and operation
- Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system

Failure to consider any of the factors cannot be reviewed by any court in any matter affecting a Metropolitan Transportation Plan, TIP, project or strategy, or Certification. In addition:

- The metropolitan planning process must be coordinated with the Statewide transportation planning process.
- Development of the required public transit-human services Transportation Plan (49 U.S.C. 5310, 5316, and 5317) should be coordinated and consistent with the metropolitan transportation planning process.
- The metropolitan transportation planning process shall be consistent with regional ITS architecture to the maximum extent “practicable”.

Findings:

- The AMATS Operating Agreement, the MOU with the Native Village of Eklutna and the AQ Agreement between the ADEC and the MOA all include provisions and requirements related to consultation.
- The next LRTP update, due in 2011, will combine both the Anchorage Bowl and Chugiak Eagle River LRTP's into one document, with one financial plan. This will be a significant improvement in regional coordination.
- DOT&PF staff served as co-project manager for the Anchorage Bowl LRTP and on oversight committees providing the project team with technical input into the development of the transportation demand model and final roadway recommendations.
- Agency representatives are active in the ranking and scoring process and that collaborative process drives the programming of the TIP. These agencies are consulted to rank and score projects especially when information is needed due to incomplete nomination forms. AMATS staff works closely with project managers to ensure adequate funding is available and that funding is programmed on the appropriate schedule.
- DOT&PF staff is offered the opportunity to serve on the selection committee for all proposed contracts for corridor studies and to serve on AMATS project teams for sub-area studies. DOT&PF staffs work closely with AMATS staff in the process of conducting corridor studies not produced with consultant services.
- The Director of the Municipality of Anchorage Public Transportation Department is a member of the AMATS TAC. Staff from the Public Transportation Department is actively involved in the development of the UPWP, TIP, and LRTP. (Note: The Municipality of Anchorage is the only city within the MPO boundaries. Both AMATS and the transit operator staff are Municipality of Anchorage employees.)
- A representative from the military bases served on the Roundtable Committee which provided guidance during the Anchorage Bowl LRTP development process. Representatives from Indian Tribal governments are active participants in the development of the Chugiak-Eagle River Central Business District Study (currently in progress).
- AMATS utilizes an online interactive TIP map to allow agencies to track TIP projects. In addition the Anchorage Bowl LRTP is graphically enhanced with maps, charts and graphs to help both agencies and the public understand the plan itself.
- Public comments and the interviews noted that communication between AMATS and DOT&PF/ KABATA could be improved, specifically in regards to the project scope, timing, and financing. Due to this, FHWA/ FTA are concerned that AMATS and DOT&PF/ KABATA have not been fully engaged in the federally required "3 C" planning – continuous, comprehensive, cooperative – process in regard to the Knik Arm Crossing (KAC) project.

Corrective Actions:

- None

Recommendations and Comments:

- We encourage continued and enhanced coordination efforts with the Chugiak/Eagle River subareas in development of the next LRTP.
- We recommend that AMATS develop a regular coordination process with Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson to discuss transportation issues.
- We encourage AMATs to enhance coordination with Chugach State Park.
- AMATS should emphasize any importance placed on the six principles of livability (as defined by the USDOT, US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)) in the planning and project selection process. AMATs should include HUD, Alaska Housing Finance Corporation, and other housing related non-governmental organizations in plan development and review.
- AMATS, DOT&PF, and KABATA must ensure integration of the best available financial plan for the KAC project into the next AMATS LRTP update. Each entity must actively engage in each other's planning processes and conditions must be provided to allow for active cooperation and the sharing of necessary and adequate information. Cooperation is particularly important because the KAC project is so large relative to the AMATS typical operating budget. The KAC financial analysis will therefore be a major element affecting the fiscal constraint of the plan. Affected agencies must cooperatively develop estimates of funds that will be available (23 CFR 450.322(f)(10)).

Management and Operations

Regulatory Basis:

Federal statute 23 U.S.C. 134 (h)(1)(G), requires the metropolitan planning process to include the consideration of projects and strategies that will:

promote efficient system management and operation;

Federal statute 23 U.S.C. 134(i)(2)(D), which provides the basis for 23 CFR 450.322(f)(3), specifies that:

Operational and management strategies to improve the performance of existing transportation facilities to relieve vehicular congestion and maximize the safety and mobility of people and goods;

Additionally, 23 CFR 450.322(f)(10)(i) further requires that the financial plan for the MTP – and per the 23 CFR 450.324(h), the financial plan for the TIP – must include:

For purposes of transportation system operations and maintenance, the financial plan shall contain system-level estimates of costs and revenue sources that are reasonably expected to be available to adequately operate and maintain Federal-aid highways and public transportation.

Findings:

- In response to a recommendation from the last certification review, AMATS has identified additional steps to further enhance management and operations strategies as follows: Complete the self-assessment checklist, incorporate this task into the UPWP, and update the Congestion Management Process (CMP) and Maintenance and Operations processes.
- Since SAFETEA-LU, AMATS has placed new emphasis on improving the performance of existing transportation facilities to relieve vehicular congestion and to maximize the safety and mobility of people and goods.
- The LRTP considers results of the congestion management process which evaluates M&O strategies to manage congestion. The Anchorage Bowl LRTP (Chapter 5, Status of the System Today) provides a performance summary of the Anchorage multi-modal transportation system based on the report *Status of the System, 2003*.
- Information on operations and maintenance costs is received from the MOA for roads, trails and public transportation and from the DOT&PF primarily for highways. Similar to forecasting revenues for capital improvements, a review of historic and recent funding was completed for the last Plan update.
- The MOA owns and operates the public transportation system (People Mover) with a combination of local tax dollars, fare revenue, and FTA funding. They coordinate with M&O estimates for long range planning purposes.

Corrective Actions:

- None

Recommendations and Comments:

- None

Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Development (23 CFR 450.322)

Regulatory Basis:

Federal regulations require the development of a MTP as a key product of the metropolitan planning process. The MTP is to be updated every four years in nonattainment and maintenance areas and every five years in attainment areas to ensure its consistency with changes in land-use, demographic, and transportation characteristics. The regulation also identifies a number of required elements that must be addressed in the MTP, including:

- Demand analysis [23 CFR 450.322(f)(1)]
- Congestion management strategies [23 CFR 450.322(f)(3), (4), and (5)]
- Pedestrian walkway and bicycle facilities [23 CFR 450.322(f)(8)]
- System preservation [23 CFR 450.322(f)(5)]

- Design concept and scope descriptions of all existing and proposed transportation facilities, in sufficient detail to permit conformity determinations in nonattainment and maintenance areas [23 CFR 450.322(f)(6)]
- A discussion of types of potential environmental mitigation activities and potential areas to carry out these activities [23 CFR 450.322(f)(7)]
- Consultation with State and local agencies responsible for land-use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation, and historic preservation, involving comparison of Transportation Plans with State conservation plans or maps or comparison of Transportation Plans with inventories of natural or historic resources [23 CFR 450.322(g)(1) and (2)]
- Transportation and transit enhancements [23 CFR 450.322(f)(9)]
- A financial plan that demonstrates how the adopted Transportation Plan can be implemented [23 CFR 450.322(f)(10)]
- Provision of public agencies, citizens, and other interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the Transportation Plan in accordance with the requirements of 23 CFR 450.316(a) [23 CFR 450.322(i)]
- Conformity determination in nonattainment and maintenance areas [23 CFR 450.322(l)]

Findings:

- The Anchorage Bowl 2025 Long-Range Transportation Plan was adopted by the AMATS Policy Committee in December 2005. The Transportation Plan was amended in April of 2007 to include the Knik Arm Crossing (KAC) project. The amended plan was provided to both FHWA and FTA via DOT&PF.
- The Consolidated LRTP joining the Anchorage Bowl and Chugiak/Eagle River LRTP's is underway with a completion date of June of 2011.
- Staff anticipates the next LRTP update document will include an Appendix with a matrix that will document how and where the federal planning factors are considered in the LRTP.
- The proposed 2007 amendment to the LRTP added an emergency planning/security element to the LRTP that defined the role of the public transportation operators (MPO and State) in promoting security and identifying critical facilities.
- AMATS Transportation Planning staff is under the Traffic Department of the Municipality of Anchorage. AMATS staff members have formed an excellent working relationship with Planning Department staff and often consult with them particularly regarding land use issues.

- DOT&PF Central Region staff were active participants in the development of the LRTP and served as co-managers of the planning project as well as served on the Technical Oversight Committee.
- Freight Mobility includes a primary objective to incorporate the recommendations of the Freight Advisory Committee (FAC) as an element of the LRTP. The LRTP dedicates specific chapters to existing freight conditions, deficiencies, and future projects.
- The LRTP contains an extensive analysis of transit alternatives (Chapter 7) including an advanced technology transit system with express bus (with separate right-of-way) and commuter rail components. The Plan contains an extensive set of transit recommendations including a substantial increase in transit service along seven of the most productive transit routes and the establishment of a new express bus service linking the fast growing Mat-Su Borough with the employment centers in the Anchorage Bowl.
- The Non-Motorized Transportation Plan consists of three distinct studies: Anchorage Pedestrian Plan, Anchorage Bicycle Plan, and Anchorage Areawide Trails Plan. At this time, the Anchorage Pedestrian Plan (adopted October 2007) and the Anchorage Bicycle Plan are completed (March 23, 2010). The Areawide Trails Plan is under development.
- The Transit element of the LRTP expands upon the existing bus system. Seven of the most productive transit routes are identified for significant service improvements (15 minute headways during the peak period and 30 minute headways for the off-peak).
- The public review process for the latest LRTP involved a multi-prong approach. The Planning and Zoning Committee (functioning as the Citizen Advisory Committee) served as a sounding board for the development of the Plan. In addition, AMATS maintained a website, held three public information meetings, conducted stakeholder interviews, discussed issues with numerous focus groups, held two formal public hearings, prepared and distributed periodic newsletters, and published a newspaper insert on LRTP issues and potential recommendations in the local general circulation newspaper.
- The AMATS Travel Demand Model is a traditional 4-step gravity model integrating socio-economic indicators, such as household income, vehicle ownership, population growth trends, employment, vehicle speed and road types, along with special generators (freight, airport, hospitals, schools, etc.) to predict future traffic patterns and volumes.
- Emerging policies and performance measures have been expressed as reductions in vehicle miles traveled, regional emissions targets, or incentive-based goals. In partnership with MOA Air Quality, AMATS is reviewing its model to understand the effects of greenhouse emission gases and to prepare for EPA's new air quality modeling program – MOVES.

Corrective Actions:

- See Financial Planning section.

Recommendations and Comments:

- AMATS should continue to coordinate the integration of the Anchorage Bowl and the Chugiak/Eagle River plans toward the development of one unified LRTP as part of the next major update cycle (June 2011). Sub-regional priorities and values can be maintained while still addressing the common concerns and issues that these two areas will increasingly need to address.
- AMATS is commended for its updated plan addressing SAFETEA-LU compliance by more extensively addressing environmental mitigation, consultation, security, safety, freight mobility, and operations management.
- Emergency planning and security continue to be important elements in the LRTP. AMATS should build on the work included in the 2007 amendment to promote security, identifying critical facilities and transportation system elements (e.g., transit system, rails, ports, Interstate system, and NHS routes).
- The updated LRTP should build on previous plans to ensure consistency between planned land use growth and transportation investments. This issue will become more challenging as growth continues within the Anchorage Bowl and spreads into the Mat-Su Borough. Special attention should be paid to long-range land use impacts of major capital investments, including H2H and Knik Arm Crossing projects.
- AMATS has made significant efforts to expand expectations for consulting with environmental interests in the planning process. The LRTP should include a discussion of potential environmental mitigation activities (at the policy/strategy-level, not project-specific), to be developed in consultation with Federal, State and Tribal wildlife, land management, and regulatory agencies. The LRTP should be consistent with available State conservation plans, maps, and inventories.
- In order to make a complete determination that the updated LRTP is financially constrained, AMATS must determine that the sources and levels of funds for all projects are reasonable. Due to the size of the KAC project relative to a typical AMATS project, it is particularly important that the best available cost and revenue estimates by source from the KAC project be included in the next plan revision. This includes documentation for the full cost (design, construction, operation, maintenance) of the KAC project over the twenty year period of the long-range plan, including direct public and private contributions as well as tolls, bonding, and other revenue sources to the extent that it is available.
- Although there are no current federal targets for GHG reduction, we expect AMATS to quantify and evaluate greenhouse gas emissions as part of the next plan update.
- The update of the LRTP is on an aggressive schedule. AMATS should consult with FHWA and FTA to determine the feasibility of completing required work by the existing deadline. Upon determining an appropriate date for completion, AMATS should prepare a detailed scope of work with milestones to ensure that progress can be monitored.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) (23 CFR 450.324, 326 & 328)

Regulatory Basis:

The MPO is required, under 23 CFR 450.324, to develop a TIP in cooperation with the State and public transit operators. Specific requirements and conditions, as specified in the regulations, include:

- The TIP shall cover a period of at least four years, must be updated at least every four years, and must be approved by the MPO and the governor. If the TIP is updated more frequently, the cycle must be compatible with the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) development and approval process. [23 CFR 450.324(a)]
- In nonattainment and maintenance areas subject to conformity requirements (see Section 2.8), FHWA and FTA must jointly make a conformity determination with the MPO on any updated or amended TIP. The TIP shall give priority to eligible TCMs identified in the STIP, and projects included for the first two years shall be limited to those for which funds are available or committed. [23 CFR 450.324(i)]
- There shall be reasonable opportunity for comment by all reasonable parties in accordance with 23 CFR 450.316(a)(1) and (3); in nonattainment TMAs, there must be an opportunity for at least one formal public meeting during the TIP development process. [23 CFR 450.324(b)] In addition, the TIP must be published or otherwise be made readily available for public review, including in electronically available accessible formats, to the maximum extent practicable.
- The following information shall be provided for each project included in the TIP: sufficient descriptive material to identify the project or phase; estimated total cost; amount of Federal funds proposed to be obligated during each program year; proposed source of Federal and non-Federal funds; identification of funding recipient/project sponsor; in nonattainment and maintenance areas, identification of Transportation Control Measures (TCM) and sufficiently detailed description for conformity determination. [23 CFR 450.324(e)]
- The TIP shall be financially constrained by year and shall include a financial plan identifying projects that can be implemented using current revenue sources and projects requiring proposed additional sources.
- Projects that the State and the MPO do not consider to be of appropriate scale for individual identification in a given program year may be grouped by function, geographical area, and work type. [23 CFR 450.324(f)] In nonattainment and maintenance areas, classifications must be consistent with the exempt project classifications contained in the EPA conformity requirements. [40 CFR Part 51]
- Sub-allocation of Surface Transportation Program (STP) or Section 5307 funds to individual jurisdictions or modes shall not be used unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the distribution is based on considerations addressed as part of the planning process. [23 CFR 450.324(j)]

- As a management tool for monitoring progress in implementing the MTP, the TIP shall identify the criteria and process for prioritizing the implementation of MTP elements through the TIP, list major projects implemented from the previous TIP, and identify significant delays in implementation. [23 CFR 450.324(l)(1) and (2)] FHWA and FTA must jointly find that the TIP is consistent with the MTP. [23 CFR 450.328]
- In nonattainment and maintenance areas, the TIP shall describe progress in implementing required TCMs in accordance with Title 49 Chapter 53. [23 CFR 450.324(l)(3)]
- Relative to STIP/TIP development in air quality nonattainment and maintenance areas, projects included in the first two years of the TIP shall be limited to those for which funds are “available” or “committed” [23 CFR 450.324(i)]. Therefore, nonattainment and maintenance areas may not rely upon proposed new revenue sources to support projects listed in the first two years of the TIP and STIP.

Findings:

- No corrective actions/recommendations provided at last certification review.
- Nominations for TIP projects come from the public, local government, the local transit provider, the State and AMATS staff. The nominations and subsequent draft ranking are brought forward to the TAC for their review and to recommend approval to the Policy Committee. The TIP directly reflects the MTP as all projects in the TIP are included in the MTP as well.
- Different prioritization criteria are used for each of three categories in the TIP. There are 15 for the roadway projects, 12 for Transportation Enhancement and 8 for Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ). The criteria were developed through the AMATS Committees by staff and were vetted in several public meetings and were ultimately approved by the Policy Committee. Projects are prioritized based on how they rank according to what score they receive.
- The TIP identifies total project cost, which includes federal funds and local or state match. Locally funded projects are not generally included in the LRTP or the TIP unless they are of a regionally significant nature. The TIP is in Year of Expenditure (YOE) dollars.
- There are 4 TCM’s committed to in the Anchorage Air Quality Control Plan. All four of these TCM’s are high priority projects and are fully funded in the TIP.
- Community Councils are invited to participate in the ranking and scoring of projects in the development of the 2010-2013 TIP. The Community Councils are also invited to offer potential projects for inclusion into the TIP.
- Minor amendments (*Administrative Modification* per 23 CFR 450.304) can be approved by the TAC without additional public participation. Major Amendments (*Amendment* per 23 CFR 450.304) require a public process which includes a 30- day review period, an air quality conformity analysis, Planning and Zoning Commission action, and Assembly action as well as the formal AMATS approval process by the Policy Committee.

- The annual list of projects for which Federal funds have been obligated the preceding year is published in the newspaper, posted online and made available at selected public libraries.

Corrective Actions:

- None

Recommendations and Comments:

- The TIP amendment process is under control with a manageable process amenable to the planning partners.
- The TIP should more clearly link individual project phases (e.g. preliminary engineering, environment/NEPA, right-of-way, design, or construction) with estimated project costs for each program year. [23 CFR 450.324]
- In addition to project costs that are programmed for each year of the current TIP (2010 – 2013), the TIP entry must also identify the total estimated costs to complete each project, which may extend beyond the four years of the TIP. [23 CFR 450.324(e)(2)]
- For major projects, refined cost estimates, implementation schedules, and revenue projections prepared during project development should be incorporated into the project information contained in the TIP as it is updated.
- AMATS should evaluate the implementation schedules and proposed funding sources of major projects to ensure that projects included in the first two years of the TIP are limited to those for which funds are “available” or “committed” [23 CFR 450.324(i)]. As such, new funding that is yet to be secured does not qualify as “available” or “committed”.

Integrating Freight in the Planning Process (23 CFR 450.322)

Regulatory Basis:

SAFETEA-LU legislation specifically calls for the need to address freight movement as part of the transportation planning process (Reference: 23 U.S.C. §134 and 23 CFR §450.306 - Metropolitan transportation planning). **§ 134 (a) Metropolitan transportation planning section indicates that:**

It is in the national interest to encourage and promote the safe and efficient management, operation, and development of surface transportation systems that will serve the mobility needs of people and freight and foster economic growth and development within and between States and urbanized areas, while minimizing transportation related fuel consumption and air pollution through metropolitan and Statewide transportation planning processes identified in this chapter; and encourage the continued improvement and evolution of the metropolitan and Statewide transportation planning processes by MPOs, State departments of transportation, and public transit operators as guided by the planning factors identified in subsection (h)(as shown below) and section 135(d).

As part of the MPO participation planning requirements under title 23 U.S.C., the SAFETEA-LU consultation requirements were expanded in order to include freight shippers, who are providers

of freight transportation services, as interested parties that should be provided a reasonable opportunity to comment on MTPs and TIPs (Reference: 23 U.S.C. 134 and §450.316 See Interested parties, participation, and consultation).

Findings:

- The AMATS LRTP outlines and provides directives for goods movement in the region. Goal 5 of the LRTP states that the transportation system will “move people and goods, safely, conveniently, and economically.” A list of 26 recommended freight projects and actions is contained within the LRTP. Freight and freight infrastructure is a major economic engine for the AMATS region.
- Anchorage acts as the major receiver for freight in the State. About 80% of all freight coming into Alaska arrives at the Port of Anchorage. The Port of Anchorage is currently expanding their facilities to include additional berths, docks, and other related operational efficiencies.
- Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport is 2nd for landed cargo in the United States and is 5th in the world for in-transit cargo.
- Capital improvement railroad projects in Anchorage include the Ship Creek Intermodal Facility and Track Rehabilitation, Rail Capacity Improvements Environmental Assessment, Historic Freight Shed Renovation, and an Automated Wheel Impact Load Detector. Representatives from Federal Express, United Parcel Service, and Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport, Fred Meyers, and the Alaska Railroad are also seated on the FAC.
- The FAC is an important mechanism to integrate freight into the regional planning process. The FAC has developed criteria to prioritize short-term and long-term freight projects that will enhance freight movement and reduce delay.
- The FAC and its members provide technical review of the freight elements found in both the LRTP and the Status of the System Report updates. Transportation planning staff gathers and obtains data from the freight industry to show historic and future freight trends.
- The AMATS FAC includes in their membership both freight representatives and private freight shippers and they provide input in their meetings which is then supplied to both the AMATS TAC and PC.
- Transportation Planning staff along with FAC members review site plan applications and road design plan sets as it relates to freight accessibility and movement (such as the placement of loading docks, medians, access points, turning radii, and landscaping).
- To forecast future freight travel demand, the AMATS Travel Demand Model currently uses the Quick Response Method (QRSM).

Corrective Actions:

- None

Recommendations and Comments:

- The AMATS staff is commended for continuing to integrate freight considerations into the metropolitan planning process.
- The FAC is a fine example of a sub-committee which has been energized to provide substantive input to the Anchorage metropolitan planning process and the Policy Committee.
- The FAC is encouraged to involve Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in FAC activities.

Congestion Management Process (CMP) (23 CFR 450.320)**Regulatory Basis:**

An effective CMP is a systematic process for managing congestion that provides information on transportation system performance and on alternative strategies for alleviating congestion and enhancing the mobility of persons and goods to levels that meet State and local needs. The CMP results in serious consideration of implementation of strategies that provide the most efficient and effective use of existing and future transportation facilities. In both metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas, consideration needs to be given to strategies that reduce SOV travel and improve existing transportation system efficiency. Where the addition of general purpose lanes is determined to be an appropriate strategy, explicit consideration is to be given to the incorporation of appropriate features into the Single Occupancy Vehicle (SOV) project to facilitate future demand management and operational improvement strategies that will maintain the functional integrity of those lanes. [23CFR 450.320(b)]

TMA's in nonattainment areas are required, under *23CFR 450.320*, to develop a Congestion Management Process (CMP). Specific requirements and conditions, as specified, include:

- “In TMA's designated as nonattainment for ozone or carbon monoxide, Federal funds may not be programmed for any projects that will result in a significant increase in carrying capacity for single occupant vehicles...unless the project results from a CMP...”
- In TMA's, the planning process must include the development of a CMP that provides for effective management of new and existing transportation facilities through the use of travel demand reduction and operational management strategies.
- “The effectiveness of the management systems in enhancing transportation investment decisions and improving the overall efficiency of the metropolitan area’s transportation systems and facilities shall be evaluated periodically, preferably as part of the metropolitan planning process.”

Findings:

- Transportation Planning staff works closely with public transit planning (People Mover), freight industry experts, and traffic control operators – such as the Signals Section and Emergency Services.

- Planning partners share data, performance measures and contribute strategies toward solving regional congestion problems.
- AMATS provides funding for travel time analysis, turning times, and volume data collection, which is used directly by the MOA Traffic Operations Center (Signals) to facilitate and improve timing of traffic control signals throughout Anchorage and Eagle River.
- Public Transportation Department maintains extensive data collections and management of the PeopleMover system and provides that information to AMATS staff to include in the Status of the System Report.
- A Mobility Coordinator was hired by the Public Transportation Department to assist in the implementation of the Travel Options Program outlined in the 2005 LRTP.
- Public Transit (PeopleMover) tracks travel times for all major transit routes and then relaying GPS movements on specific bus routes on real-time monitors installed at the larger bus transit hubs.
- The Municipality of Anchorage signed a Memorandum of Agreement last year to begin the development of a Regional Transit Authority with the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. Stakeholders include the Municipality of Anchorage, and PeopleMover.
- The outcomes of the CMP have included the development of three separate Status of the System Reports (1998, 2003, and 2007).
- The AMATS Status of the System Report completed in 2007 identified 10 congested corridors and 62 intersections experiencing significant delay. The congested corridors were found to be operating from between LOS C to worse than LOS E. Of these 62 intersections, 32% were operating at LOS E or worse during the a.m. peak hour and 61% were operating at LOS E or worse at the evening peak hour.
- A 2010 Status of the System study will be done and used as input into the 2011 LRTP update. This analysis will help determine the effectiveness of projects and congestion strategies since the previous LRTP update in 2007 and provide guidance for the new plan.
- New congestion management strategies, such as the Travel Options program are being evaluated for adoption by AMATS and included in the LRTP. The Status of the System Reports and the associated congestion management strategies have been refined throughout the years, with most recent 2007 Status of the System report including performance measures.
- AMATS uses 15 performance measures as gauges for quality and trends of transportation services, including LOS, Auto Travel Times by Time of Day, Travel Speeds, Total Annual Delay, Vehicle Miles Traveled, Transit Travel Times, Speed/Travel Time, and Volume to Capacity ratios.

- As part of the update to the Status of the System Report, other possible congestion measures may include a total number of regional trips being made, average travel speed, park and ride lot usage, percentage of roadway by level of service, changes to land use, and using quality of life indicators.
- The Anchorage Bowl LRTP (Chapter 5, Status of the System Today) provides a performance summary of the Anchorage multi-modal transportation system based on the report *Status of the System, 2003*, that was developed in conjunction with the LRTP update. Chapter 5 includes a section on congestion management, and describes the MOA *Congestion Management Process (CMP)*, created in 1994.
- The CMP affects the programming of projects by establishing a framework for evaluating current and future congestion on specific network and corridor projects.
- AMATS conducts periodic (4-year cycle to coincide with the SAFETEA-LU Planning cycle) system-wide reviews of traffic conditions and system performance by using updated traffic data. The collection of new traffic data includes volume and travel time when roadway construction is completed and new traffic patterns are established.

Corrective Actions:

- Two areas that are not adequately addressed by the current Congestion Management Process (CMP) include: 1) Identification of an implementation schedule, implementation responsibilities, and possible funding sources for each selected strategy, and 2) Implementation of a process for periodic assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of implemented strategies (23 CFR 450.320(c)(5)(6)). These elements should be incorporated as part of the CMP during the update of the LRTP.

Recommendations and Comments:

- AMATS Status of the System Report is a good performance monitoring effort for identifying and addressing congestion. The performance monitoring effort reflects a number of CMP required elements, including data collection, performance measures, identified corridors, and objectives. Additional work is needed to develop a systematic way for the CMP to assess the efficiency of identified corridors and the long-term effectiveness of implemented strategies/ projects.
- AMATS' CMP Plan should include a section to discuss how the CMP is used in conjunction with the identification and prioritization of projects in the MTP and the TIP.
- Performance measures used to monitor regional travel corridors should be expanded to include more transit (e.g., frequency, reliability), ITS (real-time information), TDM (parking, land use), and bike/pedestrian measures (accessibility) to better inform multimodal planning strategies.
- AMATS is commended for its efforts to incorporate freight mobility as part of the CMP.

Financial Planning/Fiscal Constraint (23 CFR 450.322 & 324)

Regulatory Basis:

23 CFR 450.322 (f)(10) identifies the requirements for financial plans of Metropolitan Transportation Plans which include: revenue estimates cooperatively developed between the State, MPO and transit operator; revenue estimates including public and private sources that are committed, available, or reasonably expected to be available; system-level estimates of operation and maintenance costs for Federally supported facilities and services; cost and revenue estimates incorporate inflation rates reflecting year of expenditure dollars; and the quality of cost estimates and periodic review of the cost estimates.

23 CFR 450.324 (e, h-k) identifies the requirements related to the TIP which include:

- demonstrating and maintaining fiscal constraint by year;
- identifying total project cost which may extend beyond the four years of the TIP;
- cost and revenue estimates that incorporate inflation rates to reflect year of expenditure dollars; and.
- separate financial plans that demonstrate how the adopted MTP and TIP can be implemented.

In air quality nonattainment and maintenance areas, the fiscal constraint requirements are more stringent. To support air quality planning under the Clean Air Act, as amended in 1990, the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency's transportation conformity regulations specify that an air quality conformity determination can only be made on a fiscally constrained metropolitan transportation plan and TIP in air quality nonattainment and maintenance areas consistent with DOT's metropolitan planning regulations[see 40 CFR 93.108].

Relative to STIP/TIP development in air quality nonattainment and maintenance areas, projects included in the first two years of the TIP shall be limited to those for which funds are "available" or "committed" 23 CFR 450.324(i)]. Therefore, nonattainment and maintenance areas may not rely upon proposed new revenue sources to support projects listed in the first two years of the TIP and STIP.

Detailed project-level financial plans must be prepared and updated annually for individual highway projects with an estimated total cost of \$100 million or more [SAFETEA-LU Section 1904] and FTA major capital investment (New Starts) projects. Financial plans for projects with an estimated total cost of \$500 million or more have to be approved by FHWA. These project-specific financial plans contain specific cash flow information. While the financial plans used in metropolitan transportation planning and statewide transportation planning are different from those developed for major highway and transit projects, their underlying assumptions (e.g. local economic conditions; future inflation rates; revenue sources, growth rates, and yields based upon population and employment projections) should be consistent.

Findings:

- The Anchorage Bowl 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan with 2027 Revisions Chapter 9 contains the financial plan. The financial plan factors in maintenance costs and

funding sources to establish that sufficient funding is available to pay for and maintain all improvements.

- The TIP constrains the amount of capital project investment based on funds projected to be available through the State Transportation Improvement Program. The TIP also contains other regionally significant projects funded with state general funds and general obligation and Municipality of Anchorage bonds.
- The LRTP Financial Plan identifies and forecasts revenues by federal, state, and local funding source. There is no established reoccurring state revenue; therefore forecasts are estimated based on historical trends. The TIP identifies total project cost, which includes federal funds and local or state match.
- All costs and revenues in the LRTP are currently in 2004 dollars. The recent draft amendment and next LRTP are being done in YOE dollars. The TIP is in YOE dollars.
- DOT&PF, Alaska Railroad, the Municipality's Planning, Development & Public Works, and Public Transportation Departments provide revenue information to AMATS.
- The Knik Arm Crossing revenue was based on KABATA tolling estimates and other projections for new revenue that is currently uncommitted. There has not been adequate coordination between AMATS and KABATA in developing the financial plan information that is reflected in the current TIP and LRTP to support the KAC project.
- DOT&PF, Alaska Railroad, the Municipality's Planning, Development & Public Works, and Public Transportation Departments provide information for capital, operating and maintenance cost of proposed investments.
- The LRTP and TIP do not rely on any new revenue sources. All revenue sources are based on past levels of Municipal, State and Federal funding. The LRTP financial plan does assume that state funding and limited federal earmark funding will continue to be available at a level similar to that which has occurred annually in recent years.
- The Anchorage Bowl 2007 LRTP Revision to add the Knik Arm Crossing Project did not reflect any future federal or state funding (beyond that which is programmed in the TIP and STIP) for construction, operations and maintenance, or future capacity requirements. KABATA was established by the Alaska Legislature as a toll authority and the toll revenue generated by users is expected to pay for most of the construction cost and all of the operation and maintenance expenses.
- The LRTP acknowledges that the need for increased maintenance funding would be met by increases in the State and local maintenance budgets.
- The TIP is constrained by year and by funding sources and is updated as needed to address changes in costs and revenue in order to maintain fiscal constraint.

- In the approved LRTP, AMATS is using innovative financing techniques such as Advance/Construction and GARVEE Bonds. The Knik Arm Crossing project will require tolling.

Corrective Actions:

- The LRTP must provide adequate documentation of methods and assumptions used to determine the full capital as well as maintenance and operational cost for all travel modes over the life of the LRTP. In addition, adequate documentation is needed of the methods used to determine projected revenue sources and identify strategies for ensuring availability of proposed new revenues (23 CFR 450.322(f)(10)(ii)). These enhancements to the financial plan element should be addressed as part of the upcoming LRTP update.

Recommendations and Comments:

- It is good practice to review and reaffirm fiscal constraint of the LRTP and programs as they are changed and modified overtime so that financial data is current when subsequent federal approvals are required (i.e., Air Quality Conformity finding on a TIP or TIP Amendment). In particular, revenues and costs related to system operations and maintenance activities should be regularly confirmed. Additional recommended reference for continued development of financial analyses of transportation programs include: The FHWA/FTA Transportation Capacity Building program (<http://www.planning.dot.gov>)
- We understand that KABATA is responsible for their work in forecasting revenues from transportation pricing policies for construction and operation of the Knik Arm Crossing. AMATS should monitor and revise policies and practices, if necessary, to ensure that pricing is included in demonstrations of fiscal constraint for the LRTP and TIP. This may include documentation supporting projected pricing strategies. The documentation needs to match the assumed revenues within the timeframes that are in the plan.
- AMATS should work in collaboration with stakeholders to develop a system-level analysis addressing the implications of proposed tolling to support the implementation of the proposed Knik Arm Crossing. Analysis should be consistent with environmental justice, land use, air quality, and other system-wide impacts referenced in the Environmental Impact Statement for the KAC project.
- FHWA and FTA commit to provide further guidance and assistance to AMATS and DOT&PF concerning the Federal expectations for demonstrating fiscal constraint in the TIP and LRTP.
- Financial plans for projects with an estimated total cost of \$500 million or more have to be approved by FHWA. These project-specific financial plans contain specific cash flow information. While the financial plans used in metropolitan transportation planning and statewide transportation planning are different from those developed for major highway and transit projects, their underlying assumptions (e.g. local economic conditions; future inflation rates; revenue sources, growth rates, and yields based upon population and employment projections) should be consistent.

- The Knik Arm Crossing project developed a pro forma plan of finance that was approved by the FHWA in lieu of a plan of finance under the Special Experimental Project 15 (SEP 15) program. The FHWA recognizes that the KAC project will not have final details of their revenue sources until the financial closing of their proposed public private partnership. The AMATS LRTP must adequately describe the best available financial information from the KAC project. This would include direct public sector estimated revenue contributions if they are expected. AMATS should disclose who will assume the associated risks of assumed costs overruns and/ or revenue shortfalls if that information is available. Funding sources and levels that can reasonably be expected to fund the KAC project must be determined in consultation with AMATS.
- It is not clear that the underlying assumptions (growth rates, economic forecasts, revenue sources, etc.) that are used to develop the financial plans supporting the TIP and LRTP are consistent with the assumptions used in major projects, such as the KAC project. Please ensure that these underlying assumptions are as consistent as possible in future plan documents.
- As a major project advances through the development stages, redefined project costs should be reflected back through the transportation planning and programming processes to more accurately reflect the total amount of funds that will be devoted to that project, and which are no longer available for projects identified in the transportation plan and ultimately the STIP/ TIP so that financial data is current when subsequent federal approvals are required (ie. Air Quality Conformity finding on a TIP or TIP Amendment).
- Both public and private sources of funding must be reflected in the financial information and financial plans that support the TIP and LRTP. The updated LRTP and subsequent TIPs should specifically identify all fund sources including tolls and other pricing mechanisms, GARVEE bonds, State Infrastructure Banks (SIBs), TIFIA credit assistance, Private Activity Bonds (PABs), and Public/Private Partnerships (PPP). [CFR 450.322(f)(10) and 23 CFR 450.324 (h)]

Air Quality (23 CFR 450.314, 320, 322, 324, 326, & 334)

Regulatory Basis:

Section 176 (c)(1) of the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 (CAAA) states: *"No metropolitan planning organization designated under section 134 of title 23, United States Code, shall give its approval to any project, program, or plan which does not conform to an implementation plan approved or promulgated under section 110."* Provisions governing air-quality-related transportation planning are incorporated in a number of metropolitan planning regulations rather than being the primary focus of one or several regulations.

Findings:

- Anchorage is a maintenance area for carbon monoxide. Eagle River is a nonattainment area for PM-10. The Municipality of Anchorage has prepared a PM-10 Maintenance Plan which has been endorsed by AMATS and submitted to the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation for inclusion in the State Implementation Plan. Once this is approved by EPA, Eagle River will be considered a PM-10 maintenance area. The Anchorage metropolitan area is in compliance with other criteria pollutants including ozone and PM-2.5.

- ADEC has delegated the responsibility for air quality planning within the metropolitan area to the Municipality of Anchorage. Plans are prepared by the Municipal Department of Health and Human Services.
- AMATS has worked well with the US Environmental Protection Agency, ADEC, FHWA and FTA to ensure that new air quality conformity requirements outlined in SAFETEA-LU have been implemented in the AMATS conformity determination process.
- Air quality issues are incorporated in the LRTP development process, including the creation of goals and objectives. Goal 1 of the LRTP includes an objective to “minimize exposure to transportation-related air pollution, including carbon monoxide, particulate matter, and volatile organic compounds such as benzene.” Air quality goals and objectives are carried forward for use in the evaluation measures matrix which is used to assess various transportation alternative scenarios. Air Quality policies and action item recommendations were developed by the AMATS Air Quality Advisory Group and ultimately adopted as a part of the final Plan. A separate chapter of the LRTP is devoted to a discussion of the air quality impacts of the transportation plan.
- The standard AMATS practice is to release the TIP and LRTP Air Quality Conformity Reports for a 30 day public review. During this time, the report is reviewed both by the AMATS Air Quality Advisory Group and the AMATS Citizens Advisory Committee. Public participation is also encouraged as a part of the advertised AMATS TAC and Policy Committee meetings where the air quality conformity reports are reviewed and approved. Both the TAC and Policy Committees include members who are specifically appointed based on their air quality expertise. TAC members with air quality backgrounds include a representative from the MOA DHHS and a representative from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation. The Policy Committee also includes a representative from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation.
- The AMATS Air Quality Advisory Group consists of members with scientific, professional or technical training and experience with air quality issues and members of the general public. They assist in facilitating public participation with respect to air quality issues that arise in the development to the TIP and LRTP, with a particular emphasis on reviewing the associated air quality conformity documents. Their recommendations are forwarded to the AMATS Technical Advisory Committee and Policy Committee for consideration.
- AMATS is directly involved in the development of all State Implementation Plans for the metropolitan area. DHHS staff is responsible for preparing the air quality plans for incorporation in the SIP. These plans are first reviewed in detail by the AMATS Air Quality Advisory Group who provides recommendations to the AMATS TAC and Policy Committees. These plans include a discussion of which air quality control measures (including TCMs) should be employed to ensure attainment or maintenance of air quality standards and how transportation conformity is to be determined. All meetings of the Air Quality Advisory Group, TAC and Policy committees are open to the public and there is abundant opportunity for public comment.

- The Anchorage Share-a-Ride/Vanpool program is the only Transportation Control Measure currently included in the Anchorage SIP. It has been fully funded in the Transportation Improvement Program.

Corrective Actions:

- None

Recommendations and Comments:

- AMATS is commended for working well with ADEC and the other consultation agencies and appears to be using their Air Quality Advisory in an effective manner.
- AMATS is encouraged to begin implementation of the Motor Vehicle Emissions Simulator (MOVES) model prior to the end of the 2 year grace period.
- AMATS is encouraged to determine the greenhouse gas emissions within the AMATS boundary and include it in their project ranking criteria.
- ADEC intends to approach DOT&PF to discuss centralized MOVES processing

Public Outreach (23 CFR 450.316, 322 & 324)

Regulatory Basis:

The requirements for public involvement are set forth primarily in 23 CFR 450.316(a)(1)(2)(3) and (b) which addresses elements of the metropolitan planning process (see also *Transportation Planning Process* topic area). Public involvement also is addressed specifically in connection with the MTP in 450.322(g)(1)(2), (i), and (j) and with the TIP in 450.324(b); participation and consultation requirements, which pertain to the MTP and the TIP, also are included in 450.322 (f)(7) and (g)(1)(2), (i), and (j) and in 450.324(b).

Requirements related to the planning process generally are summarized in 450.316(a)(1)(2)(3) and (b) as follows:

- Development and use of a documented participation plan providing for reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan planning process.
- Adequate public notice of public participation activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points.
- Timely public notice and reasonable access to information about transportation issues and processes.
- Visualization techniques to describe MTPs and TIPs.
- Public information and meeting available in electronically accessible formats and means, such as World Wide Web.
- Public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times.
- Explicit consideration and response to public input received.

- Seeking out and considering the needs of people traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems.
- Providing additional opportunities for public comment if the final MTP or TIP differs significantly from the version that was made available for public comment. Coordination with Statewide public involvement and consultation processes.
- Periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies contained in the participation plan to ensure a full and open participation process.
- Provide a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of significant written and oral comments received.
- A minimum public comment period of 45 days before adoption or revision of the public involvement process.
- Consult with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities that are affected by transportation or coordinate the planning process with such planning activities.

The requirements pertaining to the MTP (450.322) also include provisions addressing public outreach (450.322(f)(7) and (450.322 (g)) as follows:

- A discussion of types of potential environmental mitigation activities and potential areas to carry out these activities. The discussion shall be developed in consultation with Federal, State, and Tribal land management, wildlife, and regulatory agencies.
- Consult as appropriate with State and local agencies responsible for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation, and historic preservation concerning the development of the MTP. The consultation shall involve, as appropriate (1) comparison of MTPs with State conservation plans or maps, if available, or (2) comparison of MTPs with inventories of natural or historic resources, if available.

TIP Requirements [450.324(b)]:

- All interested parties shall have a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed TIP as required by 450.316(a). In addition, in nonattainment TMAs, an opportunity for at least one formal public meeting during the TIP development process; the circumstances of the public meeting should be addressed through the participation plan described in 450.316(a).

Findings:

- AMATS was responsive to the two recommendations provided in the 2006 certification review (February 16, 2007 Report). The recommendations were to review the expanded outreach requirements in SAFETEA-LU to ensure proper consultation with State and local agencies responsible for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation and historical preservation; and to supplement an already informative web page by providing a direct link between the AMATS and the Municipality of Anchorage's website.

- AMATS conducted an extensive public outreach program for the Highway to Highway corridor during the planning process for the 2025 LRTP. It received FHWA Context Sensitive Solution Best Practice recognition.
- The Municipal Assembly adopted *A Strategy for Developing Context Sensitive Transportation Projects* on October 14, 2008. This policy is included in RFPs for consultant services in developing transportation plans and studies.
- AMATS developed a Public Participation Plan (PPP), which was adopted in February 2009. The plan was developed in consultation with stakeholders, and local, state and federal agencies and addresses reaching low-income, minority and limited-English speaking populations. An extensive public outreach effort was employed to involve the greater community in writing the plan. In addition, special efforts were made to reach low-income, minority and limited-English speakers in the community. The PPP Appendix D, Environmental Justice, provides guidance to project managers, and suggests specific strategies to overcome listed barriers. This plan contains useful tools and suggestions for accessing traditionally underserved population; however, it is not clear when these techniques will be used.
- The MOA Planning and Zoning Commission, acting in its capacity as the AMATS Citizens' Advisory Committee, helped evaluate the effectiveness of the previous public involvement plan. A 14 member Strategic Advisory Group, municipal boards and commissions and focus groups helped form the new plan's goals, objectives, policies and measures of effectiveness.
- Five public involvement goals were adopted from the Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan and the Chugiak-Eagle River Comprehensive Plan Update
- All information for public review is disseminated to agencies, the public, transportation planners and others by email, the AMATS website and newspaper advertisements in the Anchorage Daily News and the Anchorage Journal of Commerce. The AMATS email list recipients include Community Council representatives from all of the community councils in the AMATS planning area, interested individuals including engineers and transportation planners, as well as other interested organizations. Representatives from the Community Councils then inform their members, which widens the coverage of AMATS information. AMATS also uses "Constant Contact", a web-based email notification system that allows members of the community sign up to get regular email updates from AMATS regarding projects, meetings and public input opportunities.
- The Municipal Planning and Zoning Commission acts as the AMATS Citizen's Advisory Committee and held public meetings during the development of the TIP, and the Anchorage Assembly also held a public meeting as required by the AMATS Operating Agreement, and provided timely review and recommendations on the TIP.
- The needs element of the AMATS LRTP environmental justice analysis focused on transit and the importance of the People Mover system to minority and low income populations in Anchorage. The benefits and burdens discussion identified transit recommendations from the plan and focused heavily on the public involvement and mitigation for the proposed Highway to Highway project.

- Public comments are addressed with written responses in a response summary document that is published after the initial public review. In addition, The AMATS Coordinator responds to public comments via email. Comments specific to certain projects or programs are forwarded to the TAC and PC for their information, as well as to those respective projects' managers. The public is also invited to provide comments at all TAC and PC meetings.
- AMATS engaged groups such as Bridge Builders seeking ways to improve communication media and materials, such as creating a brief, easy to read pamphlet that could provide basic public participation information.
- Efforts to include traditionally underserved segments of the public include coordinating with Anchorage Community Councils. In addition, a Public Transit Advisory Board is a major component of public transportation efforts. This advisory board is set up to address the needs for which the public transportation system is designed and interfaces as well with organizations representing various users including Foster Grandparents, Day Break and Access Alaska.
- The AMATS Public Participation Plan also has specific goals and objectives to reach out to diverse groups. AMATS is developing a list of contacts and events to reach traditionally underserved populations, including low income and non-English speaking populations. Appendix D of that plan is devoted to Environmental Justice and provides AMATS staff with tools and methods to reach those traditionally underserved populations and to mitigate barriers to public participation.
- The Municipality of Anchorage has entered in to an operating agreement (April 25, 2007) with the Native Village of Eklutna (NVE) that requires AMATS to coordinate with the village on transportation and air quality planning and programs. AMATS staff has conducted outreach to the NVE for the proposed LRTP Amendment, IRR Program, and improving mobility for the village. Coordination with NVE is planned for the next LRTP update, due in 2011.
- All comments related to plans and projects are compiled in a comment response summary document and included in the final packet for review and approval.
- A lawsuit was filed against AMATS by the Cities of Houston and Wasilla. The Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority (KABATA) joined in the suit as an intervener. The lawsuit was filed over public involvement related to a proposed 2009 amendment to the Anchorage Bowl LRTP. The amendment would have taken the KAC project completely out of the plan. During the public process a compromise was reached to move the project out of the short term projects and into the long-term projects. The lawsuit was filed because that compromise was considered a substantial change from what was originally proposed and thus required an *additional* 30 days of public review. The parties agreed that the AMATS Policy Committee would vote to rescind the move into the long range area of the LRTP. AMATS would also provide at least 30 days notice for the public, specifically the Cities of Houston and Wasilla, to weigh in on the issue.

Corrective Actions:

- None

Recommendations and Comments:

- Public outreach efforts should be continually evaluated and a mechanism should be developed to determine if AMATS' five public involvement goals are being met. The evaluation would include data on the effectiveness of the implementation of established goals, objectives, and strategies from the PPP. The Wilmington Area Planning Council is an example of a mid-sized MPO that completes a Public Participation Plan Evaluation (<http://www.wilmapco.org/ppp/>).
- AMATS is commended for incorporating expanded public involvement requirements into the Chugiak-Eagle River and proposed LRTP Amendment. These efforts should extend into all AMATS planning documents, as appropriate.
- AMATS is commended for developing a Public Participation Plan. The Plan could be improved by being more explicit in describing processes, strategies (including visualization techniques), and desired outcomes for outreach to the general public (inclusive of traditionally underserved populations; i.e., minority, low income, Limited English Proficient, disabled); public and private transportation providers, transportation user groups (i.e., transit, bike/pedestrian); and Tribal governments.

TITLE VI and Related Requirements (49 CFR 21 and 23 CFR 230)**Regulatory Basis:**

It has been the U.S. Department of Transportation's (US DOT) longstanding policy to actively ensure non-discrimination under *Title VI* of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. *Title VI* states that "no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance". *Title VI* bars intentional discrimination as well as disparate impact discrimination (e.g. neutral policy or practice that has the effect of a disparate impact on protected groups.) The planning regulations [23 CFR 450.334(a)(3)] require compliance with *Title VI* and related laws and regulations including non-discrimination on the basis of sex (49 USC 5332) and physical handicap (49 CFR 27, 37 and 38).

Executive Order 12898, issued in 1994, further clarifies *Title VI* by providing that "each Federal agency shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations." In compliance with *Executive Order 12898*, the US DOT Order on Environmental Justice (EJ) was issued in 1997.

Executive Order 13166 entitled "Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)" (issued August 11, 2000) requires Federal agencies to examine the services/programs they provide, and to develop and implement a system to ensure that LEP persons have meaningful access to those services/programs. The Executive Order 13166 also requires that recipients and sub-recipients of Federal financial assistance ensure that LEP persons have meaningful access to their programs and activities.

Accordingly, 23 CFR 450.334(a) requires that the “MPO shall certify at least every four years that the metropolitan transportation planning process is being carried out in accordance with all applicable requirements including... (3) Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended.

Findings:

- AMATS has not effectively addressed the following recommendations from the last certification review (February 16, 2007 Report):
 - AMATS is encouraged to more clearly define the goals, objectives, and performance measures that are used to assess EJ decision-making.
 - AMATS should conduct an analysis for using the Language Spoken at Home data from the 2000 census and adopt a policy for providing information to individuals with LEP.
- AMATS staff met with Edie Zukauskas, DOT&PF Title VI Specialist, on September 15, 2009, to discuss each of the recommendations from the last certification review. They received recommendations to conduct a Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Needs Assessment, to develop an AMATS LEP Policy, and add a task to the UPWP for developing an AMATS Title VI Policy that will include development of goals and objectives used for assessing EJ decision-making. No action was taken on those recommendations.
- AMATS does not have a current Title VI Plan developed in conjunction with the DOT&PF Civil Rights Office.
- The AMATS 2025 LRTP with 2007 Revisions and the Chugiak-Eagle River 2027 LRTP were each approved since the last certification review and include Environmental Justice Evaluations. These evaluations identified the transportation needs of low income and minority populations; discussed potential benefits and burdens of existing and proposed transportation system investments; and the distribution of employment with respect to subject populations.
- During development of the Anchorage Bowl 2025 LRTP, the Chugiak-Eagle River 2027 LRTP, and the Eagle River CBD and Residential Core Circulation Study (2010), minority population outreach was accomplished in conjunction with the DOT&PF Office of Civil Rights through a direct e-mail campaign to minority organizations, churches, businesses, and businesses throughout the Anchorage area. AMATS does not have a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of this type of campaign.
- AMATS has expanded its knowledge of the tools available for addressing EJ in the planning process since the last review through the preparation of its public participation plan.
- All AMATS meetings are held in accessible locations with transit access. All public notices for AMATS meetings include language for those individuals with disabilities who need auxiliary aids, services, or special modification directions on how to request reasonable accommodations.
- DBE contracting requirements apply for federal projects. The DOT&PF does not have an approved goal for FHWA highway construction projects, but does have an approval goal

for both FTA and FAA projects (both are 13% goals). AMATS/MOA will begin with a goal of 5% and increase by 1% per year until they reach the desired goal. The MOA current interpretation is that the goal applies only to the federal portion, not to the local portion.

Corrective Actions:

- AMATS shall develop assurances that the program will be conducted in compliance with all requirements imposed by Title VI and the related laws and regulations (49 CFR 21.7(a)). These assurances, a Title VI implementation plan, and complaint procedures should be developed with guidance from the DOT&PF Civil Rights Office by June 1, 2012. It should include a LEP Needs Assessment to develop an AMATS LEP Policy. Spokane Regional Transportation Council is an example of a MPO with Title VI Plan. <http://www.srtc.org/Publications/documents-plans-studies/Title%20VI%20Plan%20Update%20041206.pdf>

Recommendations and Comments:

- AMATS should develop its relationship with the DOT&PF Title VI Specialist and utilize that office as a resource.
- AMATS should develop a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the Title VI outreach similar to or included in the Public Participation Plan Evaluation.

Intelligent Transportation Systems (23 CFR 940)

Regulatory Basis:

The FHWA Final Rule and FTA Policy on Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Architecture and Standards were issued on January 8, 2001, to implement *Section 5206(e)* of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). The Final Rule/Policy requires that all ITS projects funded by the Highway Trust Fund and the Mass Transit Account conform to the National ITS Architecture, as well as to USDOT adopted ITS Standards. The Final Rule on ITS Architecture and Standards is published in *23 CFR Part 940*.

23 CFR Part 940 includes:

- Regions implementing ITS projects at the time the Final Rule/Policy was issued must have a regional ITS architecture in place by April 8, 2005. Regions not implementing ITS projects at the time the Final Rule/Policy was issued must develop a regional ITS architecture within four years from the date their first ITS project advances to final design.
- All ITS projects funded by the Highway Trust Fund (including the Mass Transit Account), whether they are stand-alone projects or combined with non-ITS projects, must be consistent with the Final Rule/Policy.
- Major ITS projects should move forward based on a project level architecture that clearly reflects consistency with the National ITS architecture.
- All projects shall be developed using a systems engineering process.
- Projects must use USDOT adopted ITS standards as appropriate.

- Compliance with the regional ITS architecture will be in accordance with USDOT oversight and Federal-aid procedures, similar to non-ITS projects.
- Regions maintaining regional ITS architecture shall develop and implement procedures and responsibilities for maintaining it, as needs evolve within the region.

Findings:

- No corrective actions were included in last certification review. It contained recommendations relating to AMATS developing a systematic process to evaluate the regional ITS architecture on a routine basis, and developing an ongoing maintenance plan for the regional ITS architecture.
- AMATS has implemented a Regional ITS Architecture working with DOT&PF. The Regional ITS Architecture final report was revised and approved by the AMATS Policy Committee on October 14, 2004.
- ITS projects and projects with ITS elements, listed in the AMATS TIP, are required to complete the DOT&PF Systems Engineering Analysis (SEA) Checklist early in project development. For construction projects, the SEA must be approved by FHWA prior to going to construction. For non-construction projects, the SEA must be completed and submitted to DOT&PF prior to project implementation.
- SEA checklist shows portions of the Regional ITS and Statewide Iways Architecture being implemented. The checklist outlines the key points in the systems engineering process in order to complete the ITS project.
- The next update to the Anchorage ITS Architecture, scheduled for 2010-11, will include a maintenance plan, but there is no current maintenance plan.
- The regional ITS architecture is updated on a project basis. An ITS project inconsistent with the regional ITS Architecture will require the agency sponsors or managers will notify the AMATS ITS coordinator of the changes to the architecture.
- The current UPWP includes a task to form an ITS Subcommittee to the AMATS Technical Advisory. The ITS Subcommittee would be responsible for updating and maintaining the Anchorage Regional ITS Architecture, identifying opportunities for ITS deployment in projects funded in the TIP, and providing guidance to project managers. It is anticipated that this will be done in conjunction with the next update to the ITS Architecture.

Corrective Action:

- AMATS has not adopted a maintenance plan for the regional ITS architecture. 23CFR940.9 (f) requires a MPO to develop and implement procedures and responsibilities for maintaining regional architecture, as needs evolve within the region. The ITS subcommittee formation and the regional ITS architecture updates are opportunities to develop and implement a maintenance plan for the regional architecture.

Procedures and responsibilities for maintaining the regional architecture needs be developed by January 1, 2013.

Recommendations and Comments:

- AMATS had received recommendations from the System Engineering for ITS workshop on June 22-24, 2009. The recommendations within the Summary Report & Recommended Actions were developed during the workshop, and facilitated by national experts. The report also included near, mid, and long-term actions for a successful ITS program. AMATS should continue work on the action plan and recommendations from the report.

Appendix A- Public Input

September 21, 2010 Public Meeting:

A public meeting for the certification review was held in the Mayor's Conference Room in City Hall (632 W 6th Avenue). The facility was chosen because of its central location in downtown Anchorage and is the venue used for the public AMATs Policy Committee meetings. Those in attendance consisted of both citizens from the area and representatives from State, and local government. Total attendance (excluding the Federal review team) was eight. Of that number, six were citizens not affiliated with Federal, State or local government or the AMATS staff.

During that meeting, the review team informed the attendees that written comments would be accepted for at least 30 days beyond the date of that meeting. All of the written comments that have been received are included below.

All six members of the public that attended spoke at the meeting. One attendee took notes and provided them to citizen attendees after the meeting for their review. One additional verbal comment was received that was not included in the notes. The Federal review team has reviewed the notes and agrees that they accurately represent the comments made so they are included below along with additional written comments that were received via email. Generally, the comments received focused on three primary areas:

- 1) The Knik Arm Crossing Project was discussed in principal as well as how funding for that project may affect fiscal constraint for short and long term planning.
- 2) The public involvement process was discussed for this meeting and for planning and project development. It was noted certain members of the public did not receive adequate notice for the public meeting. It was suggested that more funding be allocated for public involvement and a request was made for AMATS TAC meetings to be occasionally offered in the evening so that interested public could attend outside of their work hours.
- 3) The Knik Arm Bridge And Toll Authority (KABATA) expressed concern that metropolitan planning process requirements could be used to influence the delivery of projects that are considered high priority by the State.

Although these comments do not alter our findings with regard to AMATS compliance with the transportation planning process required by Federal law and regulation, we do encourage AMATS to continue working with the public in an open and collaborative manner to seek appropriate resolutions of their concerns regarding the transportation planning process.

Public Comments

Public Comment
AMATS Certification
September 22, 2010

I suggest the AMATS Policy Committee be expanded to include other major modes of transportation in Anchorage in order to decrease the affects of local and state politics.

I concur with the comment made by Anne Brooks at the public meeting September 21, 2010 that the Memorandum of Agreement should be updated. Until the Matanuska Susitna Borough creates its own Metropolitan Planning Organization, there needs to be clarity on AMATS' authority and jurisdiction in order to achieve regional transportation functionality.

The mixed-ownership of roads classified higher than "local roads" in Anchorage causes public frustration, confusion and a mixed-bag for road design and maintenance. I suggest AMATS study and present guidance to the Municipality of Anchorage and State of Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities as to a more efficient road ownership regime. The study should determine what actions would increase operational and maintenance efficiencies, achieve the land use goals outlined in the Anchorage Comprehensive Plan and Subarea Plans, and alleviate public frustration.

I suggest minimum technical expertise criteria for AMATS staff (e.g. higher-education degrees in planning, transportation, traffic, transit, public involvement).

Thank you for your time.

Kimberly Wetzel
1102 W 23rd Avenue
Anchorage, AK 99503
jane_speed@hotmail.com

Thanks, Tara. Also, I forgot to mention in my message this morning that the email announcement instructs people who cannot attend tonight's meeting to email comments by September 10th. I assume that date is another error. It would be nice to know what the real email comment deadline is, so I can alert others who are missing the meeting and who want to write comments.

Susanne

On Sep 21, 2010, at 9:12 AM, AMATS Info wrote:

Susanne,

I have made the change on the email that was sent out and will be resending the information again. My apologies and thank you for letting us know!

Tana Klunder
Executive Assistant
Municipality of Anchorage
Phone: 907-343-8301
Fax: 907-249-7539

From: susanne and thomas [<mailto:dipietro@alaska.net>]

Sent: Tuesday, September 21, 2010 7:49 AM

To: ned.conroy@fta.dot.gov
Cc: AMATS Info
Subject: Fwd: AMATS review comment

Mr. Conroy: Please see below a message that I attempted to send to you using the email address listed in the MOA's announcement about tonight's meeting.

[Craig: There is a misprint on the public notice. Mr. Conroy's email address is incorrect.]

Susanne DiPietro

Begin forwarded message:

From: susanne and thomas <dipietro@alaska.net>
Date: September 21, 2010 7:44:43 AM AKDT
To: Michael.vanderhoof@dot.gov
Cc: ned.conroy@fta.dot.gov
Subject: AMATS review comment

Der Mr. Vanderhoof:

I am an Anchorage citizen who has been very active in the AMATS process over the last 6 years. Just yesterday afternoon I read the email alert about this evening's public hearing. I believe the notice went out at the end of last week. I am very disappointed about the short notice of this important review process. I have a conflict tonight and will not be able to attend the public hearing. Had more notice been given, I could and would have re-arranged my schedule to attend tonight. If AMATS truly seeks public involvement, it is going to have to meet the public halfway--and that means more than a few days' notice for important events such as this one!

I wanted to attend tonight's meeting to alert the panel to problems with the financing of the Knik Arm Bridge project. The proponent of the project, the Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority, has represented in its recent TIFIA loan application that the project will rely on significant additional financial support from the State of Alaska. This stance appears to violate a restriction in Anchorage's LRTP, which accepts the project on condition that no additional state or local funds are used. Because the KAC project is so expensive, this change in its funding strategy is likely to affect the balance of transportation funding in Alaska. I hope that you will encourage AMATS to acknowledge this problem and to address it in a public forum that truly allows citizen input and participation.

Sincerely,
Susanne DiPietro

Here are a few clarifications that I saw. Sorry to be verbose, but the KABATA issues are complicated and about opposite of what your notes said.

Thanks everyone for your thoughts and comments.

Bob French

On Wed, Sep 22, 2010 at 10:53 AM, <Kimberly_Wetzel@urscorp.com> wrote:

I took notes at last night's meeting that I thought you might appreciate to supplement your own. I've emailed only to those folks I had addresses for. You'll notice they're call "notes" and not

"minutes" because these are not official in any way!

Thank you for your time last night.

Kim

(See attached file: *AMATS Certification Public Mtg Notes 21Sept10.docx*)

Kimberly A. Wetzel, Planner

URS Corporation

560 E 34th Avenue, Suite 100

Anchorage, AK 99503

** Note new numbers **

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Hello Michael. In addition to others, I also wanted to send you edits on the meeting notes Kim Whetsel prepared. Please see the attached.

I also am attaching the following items which we discussed at the 9/21 public meeting:

- March 1, 2010 TIFIA "application" cover for the Knik Arm Crossing project:
http://knikarmbridge.com/project_docs.html#TIFIAApplication
- ISER 2009 Mat-Su Borough 2030 population projection, 169,000:
<http://www.highway2highway.com/documents/Technical%20Reports/122309%20H2H%20ISER%20Technical%20Memo.pdf>, p. 69; Insight Research 2007 Mat-Su Borough 2030 population projection, 250,700:
<http://knikarmbridge.com/documents/IndependentEconomicOverviewandDevelopmentForecast07022007.pdf>, p. 26.
- Travel time map developed by KABATA's contractor:
<http://knikarmbridge.com/documents/FINALWilburSmithPrel.TrafficandRevenueStudyFinalReport112805.pdf>. Figure 5; and
- *Easy to Start, Impossible to Finish* report on state transportation spending and the lack of fiscal constraint: <http://aktransportation.org/files/projecteasy10.pdf>

Please let me know if you have any questions about these documents. Thank you.

Lois N. Epstein, P.E.

Arctic Program Director

The Wilderness Society

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Anchorage, AK 99501

(w) 907 272-9453, x107

(c) 907 748-0448

lois_epstein@tw.s.org

www.wilderness.org

Our mission is to protect wilderness and inspire Americans to care for our wild places.



I took notes at last night's meeting that I thought you might appreciate to supplement your own. I've emailed only to those folks I had addresses for. You'll notice they're call "notes" and not "minutes" because these are not official in any way!

Thank you for your time last night.

Kim

(See attached file: AMATS Certification Public Mtg Notes 21Sept10.docx)

Kimberly A. Wetzel, Planner
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560 E 34th Avenue, Suite 100
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** Note new numbers **

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AMATS Certification Review Public Meeting

DATE: September 21, 2010

ATTEND Craig Lyon,

EES: AMATS

Dick Traini,
Assembly Chair,
member of
AMATS Policy
Committee

Bart Rudolph,
ADOT&PF
Central
Division?

Lois Epstein,
former director
of Alaska
Transportation
Priorities
Project and
Technical
Committee
representative
for Citizens Air
Quality Group

Kim Wetzel,
URS
Corporation

Andrew Niemiec
a representative
from KABATA

Anne Brooks,
Brooks &
Associates

Bob French,
President
Government
Hill Community
Council

Kevin
Smith,
Northeast
Community
Council

**SPEAKE
RS:**

Ned Conroy,
FTA Region 10
(Seattle)

Brian Betlyon,
FHWA Planning
Technical
Services Team
(Baltimore)

Mike
Vanderhoof,
FHWA Alaska
Division
(Juneau)

Presentation by FHWA/FTA Joint Certification Committee Members

Public Comments due October 21, 2010. Email them to:

Michael Vanderhoof

Federal Highways Administration

Alaska Division

709 West 9th Street, Room 851

Juneau, Alaska 99802

E-mail: Michael.vanderhoof@dot.gov

Phone: 907.586.7464

Questions & Comments from the Public

1. Should have had more than 6 days email notice of this meeting. Several interested members of the public could not attend due to conflicts.
2. Is the composition and hierarchy of the AMATS Committees dictated by federal regulation? *AMATS Policy Committee is on the small-side; it's up to Anchorage to find the right mix of representatives (state and local; political and not). Discussion of the opportunity to add additional "operators of major modes".* Many communities have a public transportation provider on the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Also, having the state represent 40% of the votes is unusually high.
3. The Knik Arm Bridge & Toll Authority (KABATA) acts like a "rogue" state agency. KABATA has told the public and state and local transportation decision making

bodies that the Knik Arm Crossing (KAC) does not affect the requirements that the Anchorage Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and the local Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) be fiscally constrained, because they were not going to require any more public funding from the state, Muni, or the Feds, i.e., it would all be paid for by existing funds, tolls and investment from a private partner. That special requirement for no additional public funding was specifically included in the amendment(s) that added the KAC to the LRTP. However, their TIFIA federally-subsidized loan application from March 1, 2010 was different from their 2007 TIFIA loan application, in that they are now asking for annual appropriations from the Legislature to make up the shortfall in tolls. That means that the KAC will need to compete with other projects for state funding, which means that the LRTP and STIP is not fiscally constrained. KABATA was asked to provide simple spreadsheets showing their proposed financing during the hearings on the KAC of the P&Z Commission, the Assembly, the Technical Advisory Committee to AMATS, and by the Policy Committee of AMATS later in March 2010 but they did NOT provide any specific financial data and did not waiver from their assurances that no further public funds would be necessary. They could (should?) have discussed or provided copies of their TIFIA loan application that had been sent to the federal government weeks earlier. The likelihood of annual appropriations included in KABATA's TIFIA loan application means that their proposed financing is not in compliance with the conditions of the LRTP, and probably means that the Statewide TIP can no longer be considered fiscally constrained. This application by a public agency to get federal funds is clearly a public document, but we had to use a Freedom of Information Act request to learn that they expect to get state funding.

4. KABATA is using unrealistic, out-of-data population projections to calculate toll projections. The numbers KABATA is using, developed in 2007 by an out-of-state firm, are nearly 50% higher than the numbers developed in 2009 for the Mat-Su Borough in 2030 by UAA's Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER). These optimistically high population projections mean optimistically high toll projections.
5. A map of the KAC and connecting roads was provided to demonstrate the counter-intuitive logic of the project. The KAC would not save time, distance, or money for Mat-Su commuters living in Wasilla or Palmer.
6. There was concern that the Anchorage LRTP Update would be pushed through its approval process without adequate public review or support. The RFP for the LRTP Update is basic and bare-bones.
7. Public transit is a component missing from the AMATS Policy Committee. That may be a reason why bus routes and regularly scheduled buses have diminished over the past years. Our MPO is unusual because we receive no state-level funding to support transit operating costs.
8. There is nothing at a policy level to support planning that would accommodate Mat-Su/Anchorage commute and other travel because the AMATS MPO does not extend to Mat-Su. *See also comment #17.*
9. AMATS is doing a good job incorporating non-motorized transportation. It supported the passage of the Anchorage Bicycle Plan and Pedestrian Plan. The formation of the new Non-Motorized Transportation Advisory Group will bring new people into the AMATS public process.

10. AMATS needs a new Interagency Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). The 2002 MOA contains out-of-date references (e.g. ISTEA) and doesn't think forward to the concept of a Mat-Su or Regional MPO.
11. AMATS' staff are doing well with the resources they have, but the public process is under-funded. Planning is a good place for public input; it is not as helpful to gather public input during construction.
12. Anchorage's population diversity is increasing. This needs to be recognized in the planning process because involvement mechanisms need to be adjusted and/or expanded.
13. *General discussion of the formation of the Regional Transit Authority, its scope, the Constitutional amendment needed to authorize it.*
14. The public is oblivious to State and Municipal ownership of roads. When there are issues, blame is often assigned to the wrong party. Can we find efficiencies in a different ownership and maintenance regime? *General discussion of anecdotal problems including mid-road plowing stopping on Tudor Road, plow trucks driving without their blades on the ground. Also the issue of 36th Avenue, a road the Municipality will not accept ownership of until the State upgrades it to Muni standards.*
15. Are you [Certification Committee] looking at the issues that came up associated with the Mat-Su lawsuit [regarding KABATA]? *The public was invited to attend any portion of tomorrow's AMATS Planning Certification Review meeting.*
16. Is the "fiscal constraint" definition not tight enough at the state level? *Lois referenced a paper she authored entitled, "Easy to Start, Impossible to Finish". The Committee discussed future constraints on federal funding.*
17. We have witnessed a schizophrenic attitude toward transportation project priorities which results in wasted dollars when projects start and then stop.
18. What constitutes coordination that should occur between the MPO and the State? The KAC affects two communities and decisions are made by one MPO.
19. AMATS Committee meetings would be easier to attend if a portion of them (quarterly, for instance) occurred after business hours. It could also be made clear when public input is really needed or when some information is particularly germane.
20. At a Community Council-level, we do not know who we should be talking to about transportation issues. *See comment #13 regarding road ownership/maintenance, but also in terms of the scope of AMATS governance.*

Appendix B - Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ADEC	Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
CAAA	Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CMAQ	Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality
CMP	Congestion Management Process
DBE	Disadvantaged Business Enterprises
DHHS	Department of Health and Human Services
DOT	Department of Transportation
DOT&PF	Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FAC	Freight Advisory Committee
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
GIS	Geographic Information System
HUD	US Department of Housing and Urban Development
ISTEA	Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991
ITS	Intelligent Transportation Systems
KABATA	Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority
LEP	Limited English Proficiency
L RTP	Long-Range Transportation Plan
MOA	Municipality of Anchorage
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPA	Metropolitan Planning Area
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
MTP	Metropolitan Transportation Plan
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHI	National Highway Institute
NHS	National Highway System
NTI	National Transit Institute
PDIT	Program Delivery Improvement Tool
PEA	Planning Emphasis Area
PIP	Project Implementation Plan
PL	Metropolitan Planning Funds
PPP	Public Participation Plan
RA	Regional Administrator
SAFETEA-LU	Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users
SHA	State Highway Administration
SHSP	Strategic Highway Safety Plan
SIP	State Implementation Plan

SOV	Single Occupancy Vehicle
STIP	State Transportation Improvement Program
STP	Surface Transportation Program
TAC	Technical Advisory Committee
TAZ	Transportation Analysis Zone
TCM	Transportation Control Measure
TEA-21	Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program
Title VI	Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act
TMA	Transportation Management Area
TMIP	Travel Model Improvement Program
TPCB	Transportation Planning Capacity Building program
TSP	Transportation Safety Planning
U.S.C.	United States Code
UAB	Urban Area Boundary
UMTA	Urban Mass Transportation Administration (now FTA)
UPWP	Unified Planning Work Program
USEPA	US Environmental Protection Agency
UZA	Urbanized Area
VMT	Vehicle Miles of Travel

Appendix C – Field Review Agenda

AMATS 2010 Planning Certification Review Schedule September 21-22, 2010

Tuesday, September 21, 2010

Monday, March 15, 2010

8:30-9:30am

FHWA-FTA meeting

9:30-10:30am

Introductions (All)

Purpose of Certification Review and Review of Agenda – Ned Conroy, FTA

Overview of Region and Current Local Issues – AMATS

10:30am-11:30am

Organizational Structure – Mike Vanderhoof, FHWA

Planning Boundaries – Ned Conroy, FTA

Agreements/ Contracts – Ned Conroy, FTA

Self Certification – Brian Betlyon, FHWA

11:30-12:30pm

Transportation Planning Process, including:

Consultation and Coordination – Mike Vanderhoof, FHWA

Visualization Techniques – Ned Conroy, FTA

Management & Operations – Brian Betlyon, FHWA

1:30-4:30pm

Metropolitan Transportation Plan, including:

Freight Planning – Brian Betlyon, FHWA

Safety and Security Planning- Ned Conroy, FTA

Environmental Mitigation- Mike Vanderhoof, FHWA

Financial Planning/Fiscal Constraint – Ned Conroy, FTA

5:30-7pm - Public Meeting
Wednesday, September 22, 2010

8:30-10:30am

Congestion Management Process – Ned Conroy, FTA

Transportation Improvement Program, including:
List of Obligated Projects – Brian Betlyon, FHWA

10:30-12:00pm

Air Quality – Ned Conroy, FTA

Public Outreach – Mike Vanderhoof, FHWA

Title VI Requirements – Mike Vanderhoof, FHWA

Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) – Brian Betlyon, FHWA

1:30

1:30-4:00pm

Review Session – FHWA/ FTA

Final Discussion/Wrap-up - All

Appendix D – US Department of Transportation Review Team

Federal Highway Administration

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Federal Transit Administration

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Appendix E – Comments provided on the Draft Certification Review



MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE
Community Development Department
Transportation Planning Section
Permit & Development Center, 4700 Elmore Road
P.O. Box 196650, Anchorage, AK 99519-6650
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March 9, 2011

David Miller
FHWA Division Administrator, Alaska Division
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Rick Krochalis
FTA Regional Administrator, FTA Region 10
915 Second Avenue, Room 3142
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SUBJECT: Comments on AMATS Transportation Planning Certification Review

Dear Mr. Miller and Mr. Krochalis,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the January 21, 2011 Draft Transportation Planning Certification Review. The Certification Review Report reflects the findings, recommendations and corrective actions of your agency's review of AMATS planning process. We appreciate the review effort by the certification team of the document and commend your staff's efforts. We have also reviewed the document and have the following comments:

Study Area Organizational Structure **Recommendations and Comments:**

- *There is typically a distinction between the function and makeup of a planning and zoning committee and a citizen advisory committee. AMATS should evaluate the makeup of the planning and zoning commission to determine if it represents the diverse makeup of Anchorage citizens and transportation stakeholders. Ideally, the group would represent a sample of the public and transportation stakeholders in the AMATS planning area. P 11.*

The Planning and Zoning Commission is a nine-member board appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Assembly in accordance with the Municipal Code Title 4.05 and Title 21.10.010. The Planning and Zoning Commission's powers and duties are set forth in The Municipality

of Anchorage Municipal Code Title 4.40.100. The Commission prepares and recommends to the Assembly policies, plans, and ordinances related to land use planning within the Municipality. Likewise, the members of the Planning and Zoning Commission have varied professional and community backgrounds including, logistics management, municipal and community development planning, real estate and commercial development, transit and bicycle planning, citizen planning and environmental resources, industrial and construction trades, military and business, aviation and cargo, and affordable and low-income housing. In fact, the Director for Habitat for Humanity Anchorage serves on this commission.

Furthermore, current commissioners are noted for serving on the Anchorage Community Development Authority, Commonwealth North, Anchorage Waterways Council, Habitat for Humanity Board of Directors, the United Way, Fisher House Alaska, Anchorage Breakthrough (substance abuse support program), Anchorage Rotary Club, community councils, among other industry related associations, such as the Air Cargo Association, Alaska Association of General Contractors, Anchorage Homebuilders Association, and the Alaska Aviation Safety Foundation. As a result, AMATS believes that the Planning and Zoning Commission membership reflects the diversity of the population in the AMATS planning area and that the intent of CFR 450.310 is being met.

Agreements and Contracts Recommendations and Comments:

- *To improve coordination and consultation related to the proposed Knik Arm Crossing, AMATS should develop an agreement(s) with Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority (KABATA), Mat-SU Borough and the cities of Wasilla, Palmer, Houston and any other jurisdiction that will be impacted by the project. Agreement(s) with affected jurisdictions should establish communication protocols, roles and responsibilities of all parties. P 12.*

The recommendation to establish agreements between KABATA, the Mat-Su Borough and the cities of Wasilla, Palmer, Houston and any other jurisdiction affected by the proposed Knik Arm Crossing should be deleted. The proposed KAC is a project of regional and statewide significance, and is reflected as such in the long range transportation plans for both Anchorage and Mat-Su. More formal agreements between Anchorage and Mat-Su will come about at such time as communities within the Mat-Su Borough are established as a metropolitan planning organization.

UPWP Corrective Actions:

- *The 2011-2012 AMATS Unified Planning Work Program should include a timeline to estimate the schedule for completing the work tasks outlined in the document. This timeline can correspond to quarters of the fiscal year. In this manner, the UPWP becomes more of a task management document (23 CFR 450.308 (c)). P 15.*

AMATS staff used a copy of the 2008-09 UPWP as the basis for creating the 2010-11 UPWP. That 2008-09 version was very similar to the 2006-07 version. Both the '06-'07 and the '08-'09 versions of the UPWP were approved as written by ADOT&PF, FHWA, and FTA. The format for those previous versions also did not include timelines based on quarters of the fiscal year. The current 2010-11 UPWP has the majority of tasks written with timelines corresponding to quarters of the fiscal year with very few of those timelines missing. Because AMATS staff utilized previous versions of the UPWP to create the 2010-11 version, that method was utilized with the knowledge that it was indeed the correct method.

While acknowledging that not following current law based on a previously adopted version is not necessarily an excuse AMATS staff believes that for the most part the 2010-11 UPWP conforms to 23 CFR 450.308 (c) and as all previous versions of the AMATS UPWP were accepted as written though they also didn't conform to 23 CFR, that was a tacit acceptance of that method of creating a UPWP and as such this corrective action would be more appropriately listed as a recommendation to have any future UPWP's written with all relevant timelines in place. AMATS feels that if this requirement had been pointed out in either a prior certification review or during the approval process of a previous UPWP then a corrective action would be more appropriate.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan Development Recommendations and Comments:

- *Although there are no current federal targets for GHG reduction, we expect AMATS to quantify and evaluate greenhouse gas emissions, and consider VMT reduction strategies as part of the next plan update. P 22.*

AMATS staff agrees that there is value to quantifying and evaluating greenhouse gas emissions but are concerned about how to do that without explicit direction based on an authorization bill. AMATS staff agrees to address this as a possible task for inclusion in the 2012-13 UPWP based on federal targets for GHG reductions and accompanying federal regulations promulgated from the passage of a new authorization bill requiring such reductions. At this point we feel it's premature to include it as part of this certification and the efforts underway related to the 2011 Combined MTP update. Our experience suggests that without explicit direction on how GHG emissions are to be estimated, the estimation process is likely to be contentious especially if it is used to gauge the value of competing projects. For example, as part of the last LRTP process, AMATS staff projected that the Knik Arm Crossing would result in an increase in GHG emissions region-wide. These estimates were disputed by KABATA who projected that GHG emissions would decline if the bridge were constructed.

Congestion Management Process (CMP) Findings:

- *The Municipality Of Anchorage signed a Memorandum of agreement last year to begin the development of a Regional Transit Authority with the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. Stakeholders include the Municipality Of Anchorage, AMATS, and PeopleMover. P 27.*

While AMATS is very supportive of the development of the Regional Transit Authority it needs to be made clear that AMATS is not a signer to that agreement.

Financial Issues

Many of the recommendations and comments offered in the draft report focus on the financing for the Knik Arm Crossing (KAC) and the relationship between AMATS and the Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority (KABATA).

The KAC is one of two "major projects" (>\$500,000) within the AMATS study area, and is only one of many projects recommended in the AMATS Long Range Transportation Plan. In general, we find many of the comments and recommendations involving AMATS and KABATA should be addressed by FHWA in its review and approval of the financial plan for the KAC project. We

ask the comments and recommendations on the referenced pages be reevaluated and modified to reflect the appropriate role of the MPO as defined in federal regulation, as well as that of KABATA as a toll authority.

Transportation Planning Process Recommendations and Comments:

• AMATS, DOT&PF, and KABATA must improve coordination on the planning for the KAC project as part of the next AMATS LRTP update. Each entity must actively engage in each other's planning processes and conditions must be provided to allow for active cooperation and the sharing of necessary and adequate information. Cooperation is particularly important in the development of the financial analysis for the KAC project. Affected agencies must cooperatively develop estimates of funds that will be available. (23 CFR 450.322). P 18.

The recommendation mandates AMATS, DOT&PF and KABATA improve coordination in the planning for the KAC through the development of the financial analysis for the KAC project. This recommendation inappropriately places AMATS in the position of determining whether the financial analysis for the project is adequate. While we agree that AMATS must be able to demonstrate the proposed KAC project can be accomplished through KABATA within the fiscal constraint of the LRTP, we believe KABATA must have FHWA approval of the projects' financial plan. We suggest this recommendation be substantially modified to state that the AMATS LRTP is to demonstrate fiscal constraint for its major projects while recognizing that the major projects must each have a financial plan that is approved by FHWA.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan Development Recommendations and Comments:

• In order to make a complete determination that the updated LRTP is financially constrained, AMATS must determine that the sources and levels of funds for all projects are reasonable. Specifically, the best available cost and revenue estimates by source from the KAC project must be included in the next plan revision. This includes documentation for the full cost (design, construction, operation, maintenance) of the KAC project over the twenty year period of the long-range plan, including direct public and private contributions as well as tolls, bonding, and other revenue sources. P 22.

The recommendation states that AMATS must determine that the sources and level of funds for all projects are reasonable, and singles out the proposed KAC project by specifying that its cost and revenue estimates by source be included in the LRTP. We question the focus on the KAC, and note that the use of the word "must" makes the recommendation read more like a corrective action. We suggest that this recommendation be modified to cover all projects within the LRTP, recognizing that major projects require a financial plan be approved (this is detailed on p. 30 as part of the regulatory basis for financial planning/fiscal constraint). It could be adequate to keep the first sentence, which states, "In order to make a complete determination that the updated LRTP is financially constrained, AMATS must determine that the sources and levels of funds for all projects are reasonable."

Financial Planning/Fiscal Constraint Corrective Actions/ Recommendations and Comments:

• The LRTP must provide better documentation of methods and assumptions used to determine the full capital as well as maintenance and operational cost for all travel modes over the life of the LRTP. In addition, better documentation is needed of the methods used to determine projected revenue sources and identify strategies for ensuring availability of proposed new revenues (23 CFR 450.322(f)(10)(ii)). These enhancements to the financial plan element should be addressed as part of the updated LRTP due in June 2011. P 31-32.

We have many concerns regarding the comments/suggestions under section. The KAC is singled out from all other projects, and the level of documentation and analyses required under the comments/suggestions exceed what is reasonable for AMATS to provide in the LRTP. We question the focus on the proposed KAC project, and challenge the role FHWA is spelling out for AMATS in relation to KABATA. We suggest that the comments/ recommendations under this section be substantially modified to recognize that KABATA is the entity responsible for demonstrating fiscal constraint for their project as part of their financial plan. AMATS is responsible for ensuring that the LRTP remains fiscally constrained while including all major projects.

Specifically, we are concerned about the following statements:

- *“AMATS must retain the responsibility to monitor and revise policies and practices in the application of pricing and demonstrations of fiscal constraint for the LRTP and TIP. For example, future work should include documentation supporting projected pricing strategies including a detailed strategy and timeline for gaining legislative and public support. The strategy and documentation needs to match the assumed revenues within the timeframes that are in the plan.”* (p. 31) It is the responsibility of KABATA, and not AMATS, to ensure their policies and practices are adequate to support their pricing strategies and that they have the necessary public and legislative support to advance the KAC project.
- *“AMATS should work in collaboration with stakeholders to develop a system analysis addressing the implications of proposed tolling to support the implementation of the proposed Knik Arm Crossing. The analysis should address environmental justice, land use, air quality, and other potential system-wide impacts.”* (pp. 31-32) Tolling is expected to impact those traveling from the Mat-Su Borough to Anchorage. As such, the environmental justice impacts of tolling would largely be outside the AMATS study area and be included as part of the project’s EIS. Air quality impacts from traffic on the bridge will be evaluated as part of the LRTP update. The land use impacts will be accommodated in the modeling done for the LRTP update.
- *“The AMATS LRTP must adequately describe the best available financial information from the KAC project. This would include debt service levels and other direct public sector estimated revenue contributions if they are expected. A more detailed demonstration of potential private investor contributions in exchange for toll revenues must be included to the extent that it is available. AMATS should also disclose where/who will assume the associated risks of assumed costs overruns and/or revenue shortfalls if that information is available. Funding sources and levels that can reasonably be expected to fund the KAC project must be determined in consultation with AMATS.”* This level of analysis is specified only for the KAC, and seems to exceed what is required for AMATS to demonstrate fiscal constraints. As a toll authority, KABATA is responsible for advancing a financial plan that is acceptable to FHWA. We suggest that this level of detail can be provided by KABATA as part of its financial plan, and not spelled out in the LRTP.

In closing, we ask the comments and recommendations referenced in this letter be reevaluated and modified to reflect the appropriate role of AMATS, as well as that of KABATA as a toll authority. Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the draft certification review. We are available to further discuss our comments and concerns if you have questions.

Respectfully submitted for your consideration,

Craig Lyon
AMATS Coordinator

STATE OF ALASKA

KNIK ARM BRIDGE AND TOLL AUTHORITY

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February 11, 2011

Mr. Dave Miller
FHWA Division Administrator, Alaska Division
PO Box 21648
Juneau, Alaska 99802

Re: Comments on Transportation Planning Certification Review

Dear Mr. Miller,

We have reviewed the January 21, 2011 draft Transportation Planning Certification Review for FFY 2010. This review and document are obviously the result of a great effort, which we commend FHWA for. The intent of our comments is to improve the process and keep it as simple and practical as possible. Our comments are as follows:

- Several comments in the document refer to improving communications between KABATA and AMATS (pages 12, 17, 30, 32.). The report recommends signing an agreement defining communication protocols, roles, and responsibilities.

We agree that communications have been an issue in the past and are willing to do our part to improve them going forward. While signing agreements may help, we feel the simplest and most effective means to accomplish enhanced communications is for KABATA to have a seat at the table on the technical committee. KABATA is a regional toll authority of the State of Alaska and the Knik Arm Crossing is to be designated as part of the NHS. It will have profound implications for the regional transportation network and appointment as a member of the TAC will ensure that sufficient communication, cooperation and consultation occurs.

- References are made to define the sources and levels of funds by source, and “documentation for the full cost (design, construction, operation, maintenance) of the KAC project over the twenty year period of the long-range plan, including direct public and private contributions as well as tolls, bonding, and other revenue sources.”

We have submitted on a regular basis pro-forma financial plans that meet all of the requirements of 23 CFR 450 for fiscally constrained financial plans subsequent to the 2007 LRTP amendment. However, it should be clear in your comments that the State of Alaska and KABATA are responsible for the formulation of the financial plan for the KAC – not AMATS. We acknowledge that we are also responsible for providing it to AMATS. Under our SEP-15 EDA with FHWA, the TIFIA application

will serve as the financial plan until such time as our private developer is selected and project award is made. We are currently updating a TIFIA Letter of Interest, including the associated financial plan, and intend to submit it on March 1, 2011. That financial plan will be provided to AMATS once the 2011 LRTP update is officially launched and we have tentatively planned a joint workshop with the AMATS TAC and Policy Committee to go over the plan with our consultants present to explain the model and answer questions. Please change the wording of your recommendations to not imply AMATS has responsibility and control over the KAC.

- In pages 31 and 32, there is a discussion in the recommendations and comments section regarding AMATS retaining the responsibility of monitoring and revising policies in the application of pricing, and developing an analysis of proposed tolling, and disclosing risks of cost overruns or revenue shortfalls concerning the KAC.

The Knik Arm Crossing is a State of Alaska project of regional significance and pre-designated to be on the NHS. Its development and delivery the being administered by a State special purpose corporation organized under ADOT&PF (KABATA). Under AS 19.75, KABATA's enabling statute, toll rates are established by the KABATA board of directors, consisting of the Commissioners of the Departments of Transportation and Revenue, three public members appointed by the Governor, and one senator and one representative from the Alaska Legislature. Adoption of official toll rates will be done under regulations to be adopted by the KABATA board, and will likely be officially set after the award of a public-private agreement and before the opening of the facility. Decisions about how the project will be funded and delivered are not made by AMATS. AMATS funding is not part of the Knik Arm Crossing financial structure. Please change the wording in your recommendations to not imply AMATS has responsibility and control over establishing tolls or other aspects of project delivery for the KAC.

- In response to comments regarding finances, growth rates, and economic forecasts mentioned (pages 17, 22, 31, 32, 45, 48, 49) we offer the following statement to help addressing the issue:

KABATA hired Wilbur Smith Associates, the preeminent traffic and toll revenue forecasters, as the independent traffic and toll revenue consulting engineers for the Knik Arm Crossing Project. Their studies are "investment grade" and bankable on Wall Street. Their reputation and business model depend upon maintaining independence and the predictive accuracy of their forecasts. Their track record for forecasting traffic on toll roads is exceptional. Over the last 10 years their studies have supported about \$33 billion of toll revenue financings, with \$22 billion of that happening in just the last five years going into the economic downturn. Over 22 studies they conducted for startup toll roads that have opened; actual traffic has averaged 96% of forecast, with the vast majority within +/- 25% of the base case forecast – well within the safety margin for the project.

Finally, we would like to call your attention to a January 2011 public opinion survey conducted by Dittman Research which is part of our public outreach program feedback loop. It concluded the majority of Alaskans support construction of the Knik Arm Crossing. Support for a potential bridge across Knik Arm is high statewide (60%), higher in Anchorage (62%), and especially strong in the Mat-Su Valley (75%). The full results are available on our website <http://www.knikarmbridge.com> in the *Project Library* under *Household Surveys*.

In addition here are the results of opinions when asked if the KAC project should remain in the long range plan:

	“...include in Long-Range Transportation Plan...?”			
	2011		2009	
	Should include	Should not include	Should include	Should not include
Anchorage	75%	23%	67%	31%
Mat-Su Valley	88%	11%	79%	17%

Please contact me, Andrew Niemiec, Executive Director, or Kevin Hemenway, CFO, if you would like to discuss our thoughts and comments. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely



Loran Frazier, Chief Engineer
Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority

- cc: Mike Vanderhoof, FHWA Alaska
Alex Viteri, FHWA Alaska
Kris Riesenber, FHWA Alaska
Jeff Ottesen, ADOT& PF
Jennifer Witt, ADOT&PF
Craig Lyon, AMATS

